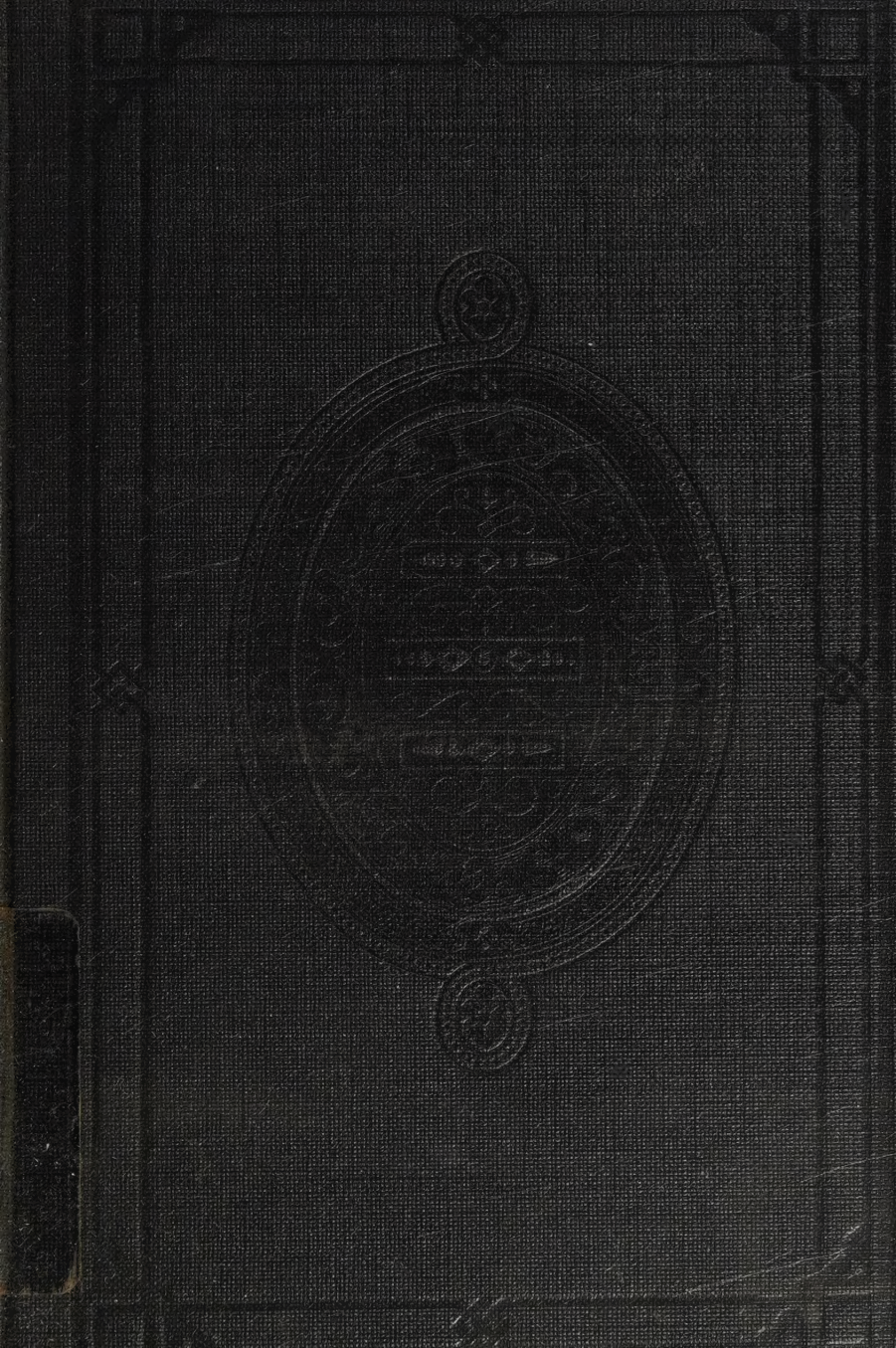

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COMMENTARY

ON

THE OLD TESTAMENT

VOL. IX.—THE MINOR PROPHETS

BY

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PREFACE.

During the preparation of this commentary the author has had in mind constantly the many students of the Bible who of necessity must confine themselves to its study in the English translations. Therefore he has endeavored to furnish here a commentary which will assist these to understand as nearly as possible the thoughts which the prophets desired to express. Much has been done within recent years for a better appreciation of the Minor Prophets by such scholars as Wellhausen, Nowack, Marti, W. R. Harper, Driver, Cheyne, A. B. Davidson, W. R. Smith, G. A. Smith, Kirkpatrick, and others. To the works of these men and of others who have written in books other than commentaries and in periodicals the present writer has given closest attention, and he desires to acknowledge here his indebtedness to them for many valuable suggestions, though he may state that in no case have conclusions been adopted on the authority of any man, but simply because the facts in the case seemed to point in that direction. Because of this last-mentioned fact, and because of the popular character of this commentary, it has not been thought necessary to fill this book with many references to other books. Those acquainted with the books alluded to will see where the present writer receives help from them, while to others it would be of little interest.

In the very nature of the case, much critical material which would have its proper place in a commentary intended for

experts had to be omitted here; and yet the author has sought to present to the reader, in a spirit of fairness, the critical questions involved, while trying at the same time to put forth only such conclusions as may be considered sufficiently well established to be of practical value for a clearer apprehension of prophetic teaching. In some cases the discussions might well have been more extensive, but limited space would not permit. However, the author has tried to say enough in each case to make the points clear. If he has failed in this the failure is not due to any desire to avoid difficulties or troublesome problems.

As in the other volumes of the series, the text of the so-called Authorized Version has been made the basis of the comments. In only one case has an exception been made, namely, in the divine name represented in A. V. by LORD; for it has been substituted the preferable reading of the American Revised Version, *Jehovah*. This form has been adopted rather than the more accurate *Yahweh* simply because it is more familiar to the ordinary reader, and therefore better adapted for a popular work. In many cases the more satisfactory translation of A. R. V. or of the margin has been added to that of A. V., and where accuracy demanded independent translations have also been given. Wherever the difference between A. V. and R. V. is not significant the reading of the latter has been placed in brackets without an indication of the source.

With perhaps two exceptions, the abbreviations used are self-explanatory. The exceptions are *G.-K.*, which stands for Gesenius-Kautzsch, *Hebrew Grammar*, translated by Collins and Cowley; and *K. B.*, an abbreviation for E. Schrader, *Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek*.

The reader of this commentary cannot be urged too strongly to acquaint himself with the introductory sections preceding the comments on the separate books. In order to understand properly any word, or verse, or section, it is important to have the broader vision of the entire book which these introductory sections are intended to give.

The author desires to take this opportunity to express to his former teacher, Professor Robert W. Rogers, of Drew Theological Seminary, his sincerest gratitude for the help and inspiration he has been to him both during his student days and since, an inspiration which is responsible to a very large extent for the turning of his attention to the field of Old Testament study.

If this commentary shall help students to a more living appreciation of the permanent value of prophetic teaching the author will feel well repaid for the labor and energy expended in the preparation of the work.

Evanston, Ill. FREDERICK CARL EISELEN.

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF HOSEA.

The Prophet.

The author of the first book in the collection of the Minor Prophets is called "Hosea, the son of Beeri" (i, 1). The English form of the name is derived from the Greek *Osee;* the Hebrew, which means *salvation,* is identical with the original name of Joshua (Num. xiii, 8, 16) and with that of the last king of Israel (2 Kings xvii, 1).

Like Amos, Hosea prophesied in the northern kingdom; he cast only side glances at Judah. Some go so far as to say that he dealt with Israel exclusively, and that all references to Judah are later additions (see pp. 35ff.). But while Amos was a stranger, sent upon a temporary mission, all indications combine to show that Hosea was a citizen of the north, bound by a sympathetic patriotism to the kingdom whose destruction he was commissioned to predict. "In every sentence," says Ewald, "it appears that Hosea had not only visited the kingdom of Ephraim, as Amos had done, but that he is acquainted with it from the depths of his heart, and follows all its doings, aims, and fortunes with the profound feelings gendered of such a sympathy as is conceivable in the case of a native prophet only." One cannot help but feel that the pictures of the religious, moral, social, and political situation, drawn with such vividness, force, and compassion, come from one who had lived for many years amid scenes of hopelessness and corruption, and whose heart came nigh breaking as he beheld his own countrymen throwing themselves headlong into ruin. The general tone and spirit of the prophecy point to the north as the home of Hosea with such force that further proof is not needed. It is worthy of note, however, that the localities mentioned in the book belonged almost without exception to

the northern kingdom, while Judah is mentioned very rarely, Jerusalem not at all. Israel is *"the* land" (i, 2); the king of Israel *"our* king" (vii, 5); it is the ruling dynasty of the north, the house of Jehu, upon which the blood of Jezreel is to be avenged (i, 4), and the kingdom of the house of Israel that is to be made to cease (i, 4). The localities mentioned most prominently are Lebanon (xiv, 5-7), Gilead (vi, 8; xii, 11), Mizpah and Tabor (v, 1), Gibeah (v, 8; ix, 9; x, 9), Gilgal (iv, 15; ix, 15; xii, 11), Jezreel (i, 4; ii, 22), Ramah (v, 8), Shechem (vi, 9), and particularly the sacred Beth-el (iv, 15; v, 8; x, 5, 8, 15; xii, 4), and the capital, Samaria (vii, 1; viii, 5, 6; x, 5, 7; xiii, 16). We may consider it, therefore, beyond reasonable doubt that Hosea was a citizen of the northern kingdom.

Little is known of the prophet's personal history. His father is called Beeri (i, 1). Early Jewish writers identified this Beeri with Beerah, a Reubenite prince, carried captive by Tiglath-pileser (1 Chron. v, 6). According to an early Christian tradition he was of the tribe of Issachar, from a place called Belemoth, or Belemon. The prophet represents himself as taking a wife, named Gomer, who became the mother of several children, to whom he gave names symbolic of the destiny of his people (chapter i). This Gomer proved unfaithful, and left his home, but in the end was brought back by Hosea and restored to his home, though, temporarily at least, not to the full privileges of wifehood (iii, 1-3). He must have prophesied for a number of years. A Jewish legend states that Hosea died in Babylon, that his body was carried to Galilee and buried in Safed, northwest of the Sea of Galilee, on the highest point in that region. According to another tradition he was a native of Gilead and was buried there; the grave of *Nebi Osha* (the prophet Hosea) is shown near *es-Salt,* the ancient Ramoth-Gilead, south of the Jabbok.

There is nothing to indicate what was the occupation of the prophet. Duhm has tried to prove that he was probably a member of the priestly class. The most important points

advanced in favor of this conclusion are the frequent references (1) to the priests (chapter iv); (2) to the "law" (iv, 6; viii, 12); (3) the reference to unclean things (ix, 3; compare v, 3; vi, 10); (4) to abominations (ix, 10); (5) to persecution in the "house of his God" (ix, 8). Similar expressions are found only again in the prophecies of Ezekiel; and Ezekiel undoubtedly was a priest. But these few scattered references are not conclusive.

Whatever his occupation in life, Hosea was a keen observer of the present, and he reveals a remarkable familiarity with the past history and the ancient traditions of his people (xii, 3, 4, 5; xi, 8; ii, 15; xi, 1; xii, 9, 13; ii, 3; ix, 10; ix, 9; x, 9, and many more). The bearing of this extensive knowledge upon the questions of Pentateuchal criticism and of the place of Amos and Hosea in the religious development of Israel is discussed in connection with Amos.

If any inference may be drawn from the comparisons and images in which the book is rich it will be that Hosea, like Amos and Micah, belonged to the country rather than to the city. (1) He is familiar with wild beasts, their mode of living, and the means with which they are caught; for example, the lion, leopard, and bear (v, 14; vi, 1; xi, 10; xiii, 7, 8); the wild ass (viii, 9); birds (vii, 11; ix, 11; xi, 11); snares and pits employed in trapping them (v, 1, 2; vii, 12; ix, 8). (2) He is not a stranger to agricultural life; for example, the stubborn heifer (iv, 16); the yoke, and ways of easing it (xi, 4); harnessing, threshing, plowing, harrowing (x, 11ff.); the corn floor (ix, 1; xiii, 3), etc. (3) The imagery reflects country life; for example, he makes reference to the vine and the fig tree, and the time when their fruit is the choicest (ix, 10; x, 1); the furrows of the field (x, 11, 12; xii, 11), the poppy (x, 4), thorns and thistles (x, 8), nettles (ix, 6), reeds (xiii, 15), etc.

The question of Hosea's marriage requires further discussion. Chapter i, 2, 3, comes under consideration here (compare also iii, 1): "When Jehovah spake at the first by Hosea,

Jehovah said unto Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredom and children of whoredom; for the land doth commit great whoredom, departing from Jehovah. So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim." This account has received various interpretations, all of which may be arranged under three heads: I. It has been thought to mean that Hosea, at the divine command, allied himself with a woman who at the time was known to be a sinner, and that he did so with the purpose of reclaiming her. Concerning this interpretation it may be said: 1. There is no hint of such a purpose given or implied in the narrative. 2. The question may be raised, seriously and reverently, how a holy and wise God could have given such a command to his servant, whose ministry he must have desired to be efficient. Or, to put the question differently, how could Hosea have recognized the voice of God in the impulse which prompted him to marry a woman of unchaste life? Would he not rather have thrust from him such impulse as a snare and temptation? An alliance of this character would inevitably expose a prophet to well-merited contempt; for it would make the impression that he was condoning the immorality of his countrymen, which it was his mission to condemn. A. B. Davidson says on this point, "To suppose that Jehovah would have commanded his prophet to ally himself with a woman already known as of an unchaste life is absurd and monstrous." It is an entirely different thing when afterward he seeks to reclaim the woman (iii, 1), and represents his efforts to do so as due to a divine command, because she was then his wife. 3. The third and most serious objection to this interpretation is the fact that the interpretation which considers the woman already a sinner when taken to wife does not suit the symbolism. The relation between Hosea and Gomer symbolizes the relation between Jehovah and Israel. But it is the view of Hosea, as well as of all the early prophets, that Israel was pure at the beginning of her union with Jehovah, and only corrupted herself at a later period (ix, 10; compare Jer. ii, 2, etc.). In order to have

consistent symbolism Gomer must have been pure when Hosea married her, and must have become corrupt, at least openly, later. The validity of these objections is generally recognized, and this interpretation has few adherents now. II. Some interpreters have regarded the whole narrative as an allegory without any historical basis in the domestic life of the prophet. This view also is open to serious objections: 1. It is undoubtedly true that sometimes the prophets express their teaching in the form of narratives of transactions which it is not necessary to suppose actually took place (Isa. v, 1-7; compare especially Ezekiel); but it is equally true that sometimes the prophets did perform real actions having a symbolic meaning (Isa. viii, 1; Jer. xxviii, 10; 1 Kings xxii, 11, etc.). In the narrative of Hosea there is certainly not the slightest hint of its parabolic character; the entire narrative bears the stamp of reality, and only a literal interpretation of the story as narrated in i, 2-9; iii, 1-3, seems to satisfy the demands of language. This difficulty is not removed by the theory that the transactions related were revealed to the prophet in a vision, and that therefore they impressed themselves upon his imagination as vividly as though he had actually lived through them. 2. The parabolic interpretation leaves us without a key to the prophet's teaching. How did he come to regard Jehovah as *married* to Israel? Whence his conception of the intense and passionate love of Jehovah for his faithless spouse? True, the representation of the relation between a deity and his worshipers or the land of the worshipers under the figure of the marriage relation is not unknown in the religious literatures of other Semitic nations, but the ethical and spiritual conception of Hosea is as far above the conception of the surrounding peoples as the heavens are above the earth. It is certainly not without reason that Cheyne says, "He must have been prepared by personal experience to find a moral element in this conception which fitted it for the use of a prophet of Jehovah." 3. The allegorical interpretation does not remove the moral difficulty. If the transaction was one which would have been

repugnant to the moral sense, is it probable that the prophet would have chosen it as the basis of an allegory? Moreover, if the prophet had a faithful wife, is it credible that he would have exposed her to the suspicion of unchastity and infidelity, as he would have done by the use of this allegory, which certainly does not bear its allegorical character upon its face? 4. The name of the wife is strongly in favor of a literal interpretation. If the story were an allegory we would expect the wife to bear a significant name. Jezreel (i, 4), Lo-ruhamah (i, 6), and Lo-ammi (i, 9) tell their own story, but "Gomer the daughter of Diblaim" (i, 3) yields no obvious symbolical meaning. The natural inference is that it is the actual name of a woman who became the prophet's wife. III. The third, and most probable, view regards the narrative as a record of actual facts, and yet is different from the first interpretation in some very important respects. Gomer is thought to have been unstained when she became the wife of Hosea. This view is supported by the expression "a wife of whoredom" (i, 2). Had Hosea actually meant to say that she was already devoted to an unchaste life he would in all probability have called her "a harlot." (On "children of whoredom" compare comment on i, 2.) The expression seems to denote a woman of unchaste disposition. The evil tendencies were within Gomer, but they had not yet manifested themselves. Hosea loved her dearly, but his love was not sufficient to prevent the outbreak. She finally abandoned him for her paramours, or perhaps for the licentious rites connected with the worship of the Baals.

As the prophet, his heart still burning with tender love for his faithless spouse, sat and pondered over his past domestic experience he came to see that even this sad occurrence was not a blind chance, but in accord with divine providence. Jehovah led him into this experience in order to teach him the lesson which he in turn was to teach Israel, and which he could not have learned as well in any other way. The significance of it all he did not know at the time of the occur-

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rence; only gradually it dawned upon him that so far as his message to his people was concerned the unhappy alliance was the first step in his prophetic career. From the vantage point of the later revelation Hosea described the earlier experience. This interpretation gives a natural meaning to the narrative; it removes the serious moral difficulty and supplies the key to Hosea's teaching. It would be wrong, however, to assume that Hosea was not a prophet until after all these experiences had come to him. He must have been conscious of a prophetic commission even before the birth of his firstborn, else how would he have come to give him the symbolic name? Nevertheless, the tone of the entire book shows that his own personal domestic experience was the means whereby God spake to him and supplied him with his prophetic message to Israel. Therefore Hosea is justified in calling the impulse to marry Gomer the beginning of his prophetic ministry.

The experience of Hosea in thus recognizing at a later time the hand of God in events already past is not absolutely unique, for it often happens that God's instruments act under his direction without being conscious that they are thus guided; only at a later time their eyes are opened so that they see the reality of the divine providence. Some, still seeing a moral difficulty, may ask why it is that God should lay this heavy burden upon his servant. In reply it may be said that it appears to be a universal law of this sin-stricken world that God makes perfect through suffering; that redemption is wrought out through sacrifice. But the preparation of Hosea for his mission to Israel in accord with this law is something entirely different from giving a command that would outrage the prophet's moral sense and expose him to the scorn of his countrymen.

The Time of Hosea.

The title of the book (i, 1) gives as the time of Hosea's activity "the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and the days of Jeroboam, the son of Joash, king of Israel." If this title could be followed implicitly the

date of Hosea would be fixed during the latter half of the eighth century B.C. The accuracy of the title has been questioned, however, and it is now generally thought that it is not Hosea's, and that it has not reached us in the form given to it by its author. On the first point Adam Clarke wrote, "I think the first verse to be a title to this book added by the compiler of his prophecies"; and again, "It is therefore very probable that the title is not Hosea's, but some ancient transcriber's." The modern view is based upon the following considerations: 1. Internal evidence shows that chapters i—iii belong to the later years of Jeroboam II, and that, on the whole, iv—xiv belong to the troubled period subsequent to his death; this being so, it would seem strange that the later date (Uzziah to Hezekiah) should be given before the earlier (Jeroboam), and that no reference should be made to the kings following Jeroboam who were contemporaries of the kings of Judah mentioned. 2. Hosea was a citizen of Israel (p. 9), he spoke and wrote in and for the northern kingdom. Is it not strange that in dating the book he should give preference to the kings of Judah, mentioning only one king of Israel, and him in the last place? 3. It is, to say the least, extremely doubtful that any of the prophecies in the book date from a period after 734; that is, from the greater part of the reign of Ahaz and the whole of Hezekiah's. In 734 Tiglath-pileser III deported to Assyria the inhabitants of the trans-Jordanic territory (2 Kings xv, 29; *K. B.*, ii, p. 33), but no mention is made in Hosea of any judgment already suffered by Gilead; it is referred to as an integral part of the northern kingdom (vi, 8; xii, 11; compare v, 1). In 734 Assyria was an enemy of Israel; during the succeeding years it claimed sovereignty over the latter; in the book of Hosea Assyria is nowhere regarded as an actual enemy in the present or in the immediate past, but as a worthless and dangerous ally (v, 13; vii, 11; viii, 9; xii, 1; xiv, 3). Again, the book says nothing of the invasion of Judah by Israel and Damascus, which took place in 735-734. This was an important event in Hebrew history,

and if it had already taken place the silence of Hosea, so familiar with every occurrence in the nation's history, would seem almost inexplicable. In these and other respects the conditions reflected in iv—xiv are those existing in Israel subsequent to the death of Jeroboam II down to about 735; they are inconsistent with the period after 734.

While these considerations may fall short of actual demonstration, they cannot be disregarded, and practically all modern commentators are agreed that they are sufficiently weighty to forbid the acceptance of the testimony of the title as decisive in determining the date of Hosea's activity. The original title may have contained simply the note, "in the days of Jeroboam, the son of Joash, king of Israel," and may have been intended only for chapters i—iii. When a title had to be found for the entire book by the collector of the Minor Prophets, then, in order to indicate that the second part of the book belonged to a later period, the other chronological notes were added, perhaps to indicate at the same time that Hosea was, approximately at least, a contemporary of Isaiah and Micah (Isa. i, 1; Mic. i, 1). In 721 the northern kingdom disappeared, while Judah maintained itself for many years more; the restoration centered around Jerusalem, and the postexilic community considered itself the descendant of Judah; therefore it was perfectly natural that in dating the book precedence should be given to the kings of Judah. At any rate, it may be safe to conclude that, so far as we have any record, Hosea's activity ceased about 735.

It began probably after the close of the prophetic career of Amos. 1. The title points in that direction, whatever the value of its testimony. 2. The country, as described in i—iii, the earliest portion, was in a prosperous condition, which would make these chapters at least as late as Amos. 3. The judgment as announced even in i—iii appears to be more imminent than is represented by Amos. 4. Internal evidence places it beyond doubt that iv—xiv belong to a later period than the time of Amos. These chapters contain clear indications

of the state of anarchy and misrule into which the northern kingdom fell upon Jeroboam's death (vii, 7; viii, 3, 4; x, 3, 4; xiii, 10, 11, etc.). We may not be far wrong if we place the beginning of Hosea's ministry at about 750 and his activity between 750 and 735. Hosea may have heard Amos; it is probable that he at least knew of him and of his work, though there are few traces of the earlier prophet's influence in Hosea's teaching (compare iv, 15, with Amos v, 5; viii, 14, with Amos i, 4).

For a picture of the political, social, moral, and religious conditions in Israel during the first years of Hosea's ministry the reader may turn to the Introduction to Amos. The conditions described there continued to the close of Jeroboam's reign, only some of the vices became more aggravated from year to year (iv, 1ff., 11ff.; vii, 1ff., etc.). With the death of Jeroboam political conditions changed. The reign of this king had been a long one, marked by successes without and prosperity within; but the dynasty of Jehu, of which Jeroboam II was the fourth ruler, did not satisfy the eighth century prophets, though it had been placed upon the throne with the sanction and aid of the prophetic order (2 Kings ix, x). The luxury, selfishness, oppression of the poor, and kindred vices, growing out of the prosperity, were denounced in stern tones by Amos, and even he announced the overthrow of the "house of Jeroboam" (vii, 9). Almost the first words in the Book of Hosea announce judgment upon this dynasty (i, 4, 5; reference is to 2 Kings x, 11). The threat was fulfilled shortly after the death of Jeroboam. Party spirit, no longer held in check by a strong hand, broke out, and his son and successor, Zechariah, was slain in a conspiracy after a reign of only six months. With him the dynasty of Jehu came to an end. There followed a period of anarchy, of which Hosea supplies a vivid picture (vii, 3-7; viii, 4). Kings came forward in rapid succession; the external policy was one of weakness and vacillation. Shallum, the murderer of Zechariah, after one month was overthrown by Menahem. He,

to strengthen his position, bought the support of Tiglath-pileser III (2 Kings xv, 19, 20; compare Hos. viii, 9, 10). At the same time, or shortly after, another party was seeking help from Egypt (xii, 1). Menahem died a natural death, and was succeeded by his son, Pekahiah, who after two years was assassinated by Pekah (2 Kings xv, 25). The new king entered into an alliance with Rezin of Damascus, and together they invaded Judah (2 Kings xvi, 6; Isa. vii, 1-3). Pekah was deposed and murdered by Hoshea (2 Kings xv, 30), with the connivance and support of the Assyrian king (*K. B.*, ii, p. 33), in 734, and Hoshea became the last king of the northern kingdom. Little needs to be added to what is said in connection with Amos concerning the moral and religious situation. At the time of Hosea the excesses had become even more marked. The latter sums up his indictments in one word, *whoredom*. Israel, the spouse of Jehovah, had proved faithless to her husband. The evidences of her unfaithfulness were seen in the sphere of religion, of ethics, and of politics, and the sins provoking the anger of Jehovah and his prophet center around these three heads. The Israelites were without the knowledge of Jehovah (iv, 6; v, 4, etc.); as a result they were ignorant concerning the real requirements of Jehovah, and their worship was not acceptable to him. Nominally they paid homage to Jehovah (v, 6; vi, 6ff.); in reality they honored the Baals (see on ii, 5). This illegitimate worship called forth Hosea's severest and most persistent condemnation (ii, 2ff.; iv, 11ff.; viii, 4ff.; ix, 10; x, 1ff.; xiii, 1ff.; xiv, 1-3). In the sphere of ethics their lack of the knowledge of Jehovah resulted in conduct absolutely contrary to the demands of Jehovah; immoralities, crimes, and vices of every description were practiced openly and in defiance of all prophetic exhortations (iv, 1, 2, 6ff., 13, 18; vi, 8, 9; vii, 1-7; x, 4, 9, 12ff.). In the sphere of politics the faithlessness manifested itself in a twofold manner: (1) in rebellion against all legitimate authority, and assassinations of various kings and princes (vii, 1-7; viii, 4; xiii, 10, 11), and (2) in de-

pendence upon human defenses (viii, 14; x, 13; xiv, 3) and in foreign alliances (v, 13; vii, 8, 11-13; viii, 9; xii, 1; xiv, 3; compare vii, 16; viii, 13; ix, 3ff.; x, 6; xi, 11) rather than in the power of Jehovah.

Contents and Outline of the Book.

The Book of Hosea contains the substance of the prophet's earnest and persistent appeals by which he sought to bring the faithless nation back to its divine Master. It falls naturally into two well-marked divisions, chapters i—iii and iv—xiv. The first division sets forth the prophet's marriage (pp. 11ff.) and gives the "moral of the story," Jehovah's love and Israel's faithlessness. Chapters i, 2-9; iii, 1-3, contain the story, and i, 10—ii, 23; iii, 4, 5, the exposition. "In chapters i—iii the prophet has abstracted from his prophetic speeches and career the essential conception of his teaching and set it as a kind of program at the head of his book." The second division, chapters iv—xiv, differs widely from the first and has sometimes been called the "Second Book of Hosea." It contains not a verbatim report, but only the substance of the prophet's discourses. A careful study will show that Cheyne is probably correct when he says, "We cannot suppose that Hosea delivered any part of this book in its present form; it can only be a reproduction by the prophet himself of the main points of his discourses, partly imaginative, partly on the basis of notes." It is impossible to trace in this second division a definite plan of arrangement, though fresh beginnings may be noted in iv, 1; v, 1; ix, 1; xi, 12; xiii, 1; xiv, 1. Various attempts have been made to subdivide the chapters according to the ideas emphasized in the separate sections. Of these attempts two may be mentioned. Ewald made three subdivisions: (1) iv, 1—vi, 11a, The Arraignment; (2) vi, 11b—ix, 9, The Punishment; (3) ix, 10—xiv, 9, Retrospect of the earlier history, exhortation and comfort. Similarly Kirkpatrick: (1) iv—viii, Israel's Guilt; (2) ix, 1—xi, 11, Israel's Doom; (3) xi, 12—xiv, 9, Retrospect and Prospect. Neither these nor any of the

other attempts can be called entirely successful. The prophet from beginning to end has in mind the hopeless condition of his people; he exhorts, laments, warns, pleads, denounces, promises—in fact, uses every possible method of persuasion—in order that he may win the people back to a pure and acceptable service of God.

The contents of the book may be sketched briefly as follows: Following the title (i, 1) the prophet relates how, at the divine command, he took in marriage "a wife of whoredom," Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim (2, 3). By her he had three children, to whom he gave symbolic names: Jezreel, symbolizing the overthrow of the house of Jehu (4, 5); Lo-ruhamah, announcing that Jehovah will no more have mercy upon Israel (6, 7); Lo-ammi, symbolizing the utter rejection of Israel by Jehovah (8, 9).

The next three verses (i, 10—ii, 1; see general remarks on i, 10—ii, 1) contain a promise of glorious restoration. Jehovah will again have mercy upon Israel, which will once more be called "the people of Jehovah", and the reunited north and south, under one leader, will triumph over all enemies.

Before considering the contents of ii, 2-23, it will be necessary to mention the contents of iii, 1-3, for these verses attach themselves naturally and logically to i, 2-9. Chapter iii, 1, is the continuation of the story of Hosea's domestic life. He is told to go and love "a woman beloved of her friend, and an adulteress." This woman can be no other than Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim (i, 3). *Lo-ammi* (i, 9) suggests the step in the domestic drama which is left unrecorded. The woman left her home to give herself more unreservedly to her shameful practices; and she seems to have become the slave concubine of another. Hosea, impelled by love and a divine impulse, brings her back, though for a while he does not restore her to the full privileges of wifehood (iii, 1-3).

The application of this domestic tragedy is contained in ii, 2-23; iii, 4, 5. The historical persons in i, 2-9; iii, 1-3—the prophet, his wife, and their children—become allegorical

figures: Israel is the adulterous wife, Jehovah the deceived but still loving husband, the individual Israelites the children. Some of the latter have remained free from the sins of the mother; to these Jehovah addresses himself (verse 2), pleading with them to attempt the conversion of the faithless mother and wife. The prophecy opens with a description of Israel's whoredom (2-5), which is followed by an announcement of the evil consequences of the faithlessness, first in figurative (6, 7), then in literal language (9-13). The whole is followed by the delineation of the efforts on the part of Jehovah to win back the faithless wife, and of the glories awaiting her when she comes to her senses. Israel will be restored to the intimate fellowship with Jehovah enjoyed in the beginning (14-17), peace undisturbed by man or beast will reign (18); once more Jehovah will enter into marriage relation with Israel, but the new union will be more permanent and spiritual (19, 20). Another feature of the future blessedness will be the extreme fertility of the soil (21, 22); Israel will be permanently established in the promised land, cured forever from running after other gods (23). Chapter iii, 4, is parallel in thought with ii, 14, 15. Chapter iii, 5, introduces a new feature in the final blessedness, the advent of the Messianic King. With this sublime promise the first division closes.

The second division, chapters iv—xiv, opens with a solemn summons to Israel to hear the indictment brought by Jehovah. Religiously and morally the people are hopelessly corrupt (chapter iv). In the first part of the chapter (1-10) the prophet emphasizes the moral corruption in everyday life; in the rest (10-19), the immoral practices connected with the religious cult. Both sections close (verses 9, 10, 19) with announcements of judgment. In connection with the general condemnation the prophet accuses the priests of being chiefly responsible for the lamentable condition (especially verses 4-8). They have failed to instruct the people in the "law of Jehovah."

The next four chapters (v—viii) belong together, though not necessarily forming one discourse. They present a detailed description of the manner in which corruption penetrated the entire public life and affected the state from the highest to the lowest. Mingled with the pictures of corruption are exhortations, warnings, and threats of inevitable destruction. Of the four chapters, v falls naturally into two parts: 1-7, in which the emphasis is preëminently, though not exclusively, upon Israel's guilt, and 8-15, which deal primarily with judgment; the time of mercy is past. The words are directed against the priests, the people, and the king with his courtiers. The civil and ecclesiastical leaders are chiefly to blame, but the whole nation must suffer the consequences. In v, 15, is expressed the hope that Israel will yet "seek Jehovah." This hope will be realized; the people will return. The prophet places in the mouths of the Israelites words of mutual exhortation to "return unto Jehovah" (vi, 1-3), but they return without real heartfelt repentance. There is not one expression of sorrow for wrongdoing, only anxiety to escape the distress and punishment. For this reason Jehovah is not favorably impressed with the supplication, as his reply (vi, 4—viii, 14) shows. It is almost impossible to recognize any distinct break throughout this reply. The whole is a severe condemnation of the people's attitude toward Jehovah. Verse 4 may be regarded as the direct reply. He perceives that the sentiments expressed in 1-3 do not come from a truly penitent heart. But if all he has done has failed to lead to repentance, what can he do? From this question he passes immediately to point out the people's utter misconception of the divine commands (6), and to delineate their sinful career; the corruption seems incurable (7-11a). With 11b commences a new picture of the moral degradation and the resulting anarchy. The mercy of Jehovah manifesting itself in his willingness to remove the distress had no salutary effect. Gradually their wrongs have completely surrounded them, so that escape is impossible; even repentance seems to be out of

the question (vii, 1, 2). While some details in the interpretation of 3-7 are uncertain the general drift of the prophet's argument is clear. He describes in vivid colors the corruption of the whole nation, from the king down, and points out that the existing anarchy is the inevitable result of the same: corruption, adultery, drunkenness, conspiracy, assassination everywhere; not one redeeming feature. Jehovah alone could heal the disease, but no one calls upon him (7). Instead, Israel has mingled with the "nations," there to learn wisdom and to find help (8). Disaster has been the result (9, 10), but still it persists; hither and thither it turns, like a silly dove (11), unaware that it is becoming entangled in a net from which there can be no escape (12). Jehovah at one time had high expectations for his children. What a disappointment they have become (13-16a)! Judgment is now inevitable; rapidly it is approaching (vii, 16b—viii, 3). In viii, 4, the prophet renews his attack upon Israel; the political revolutions are in reality rebellion against Jehovah (4); the idolatry is an abomination to him (4-6); they must reap what they have sown (7); appeals to foreign nations will not save them (8-10). Once more he condemns the religious practices, then the section closes with a threat of judgment (11-14).

A new beginning is marked in ix, 1. The prophet beholds the rejoicing of the people at the time of harvest, perhaps at a joyous religious feast. Such rejoicing was perfectly natural, but verse 1 implies that the celebration, though nominally in recognition of Jehovah's goodness, was in reality in honor of the Baalim. This the prophet cannot endure. He warns the people not to be too exuberant (1), for the occasions of rejoicing will soon cease. On account of their apostasy Jehovah will withdraw his blessings (2); yea, they will be carried into exile (3), where, upon an unclean land, joyful feasts can no longer be celebrated (4, 5); their own land will become a wilderness (6). After announcing the impending doom the prophet points out once more the spiritual and moral apostasy responsible for the judgment (7-9).

Three times in chapters ix—xi (ix, 10; x, 9; xi, 1) Hosea reverts to the early history of Israel to show how loving had been the divine care and how persistent Israel's rebellion and apostasy. In the beginning Israel appeared to Jehovah as a desirable fruit (x), but erelong contact with the Canaanitish religion caused contamination, and Israel became an abomination in the sight of Jehovah (10); therefore awful judgments will come (11-17).

Once more Hosea reverts to Israel's guilt in chapter x. Under the figure of a luxuriant vine the prophet describes Israel's prosperity; steadily it increased, but instead of producing good grapes it produced bitter grapes. The greater the prosperity the more flagrant the religious and moral corruption (1, 2). For this reason altars, idols, pillars shall be broken down, the calves of Samaria shall be carried into Assyria, priests and people shall mourn in consternation (3-6), even the king shall be cut off (7); the high places shall be destroyed, thorns and thistles shall grow over them; in terror the people shall cry for the mountains and hills to fall upon them (8).

A new presentation of Israel's guilt begins with verse 9. In the very beginning a great crime darkened their history, and from that moment on they have stubbornly resisted every and all efforts to lead them into a higher and purer life (9); therefore death and destruction are awaiting them (10, 11). The announcement of judgment is interrupted by an exhortation to repentance (12) which, however, immediately changes again into a threat (13-15). In xi, 1, the prophet turns once more to the beginning of Israel's history. He points out how great, strong, and tender has been the divine love (1, 2, 4), and how ungrateful the favored people (3, 7). Hence justice must have its way (5, 6). Yet the divine compassion goes out for the prodigal (8); the judgment will be tempered by mercy, and after it has served its disciplinary purpose Israel will be restored to divine favor (9-11).

Chapter xi, 12 (xii, 1, in the Hebrew), begins a new series

of indictments. Chapter xii also is one of peculiar difficulties. The interpretation of details is by no means certain. The general thought seems to be that Israel—the whole nation—has played false with Jehovah in making covenants with foreign nations (xi, 12; xii, 1). Therefore the anger of Jehovah is aroused (2). Three incidents in the history of the patriarch Jacob are mentioned, to bring out more distinctly the contrast between the ancestor so anxious for the divine blessing and the descendants so indifferent to Jehovah (3-5). If only they would truly turn to the God of Jacob he would have mercy upon them (6).

Israel's, that is, the people's, sole ambition has been to accumulate wealth, and shameful have been the means by which they have sought to attain it (7); they glory in their success (8), but it shall avail them nothing, for Jehovah is about to drive Israel back into the desert (9). Persistent have been the efforts on the part of Jehovah to prevent the judgment (10); therefore no one can be blamed but the people (11). By a comparison of the experiences of the nation with those of Jacob in Aram the prophet seeks to show what great things Jehovah has done for the people, and how the divine love was met with persistent ingratitude and provocation; in view of this the sentence must stand (12-14).

Apparently a new discourse begins with xiii, 1. It opens with a reference to the history of the tribe of Ephraim. In the beginning it occupied a position of prominence in the nation; when it apostatized from Jehovah it signed its own death warrant (1). With this warning example before them the Israelites should have learned their lesson, but they failed to do so; they persisted in shameless idolatry; therefore they will vanish like the chaff before the whirlwind (2, 3). Their attitude seems unintelligible, since the God whom they thus reject is the God who has led them from the time of the Exodus; but the more Jehovah has prospered them the more arrogant they have become, the more forgetful of him. Therefore he will devour them like a lion, wild beasts shall tear

them (4-8). The destruction of Israel is now inevitable; no one can help; even Jehovah can no longer show mercy (9-14). The discourse closes with a threat of utter destruction (15, 16).

Chapter xiv is permeated by a spirit different from that of the preceding chapters; denunciation gives place to promise. The prophet exhorts Israel to return to Jehovah in deep humility and sorrow for sin (1, 2a); he puts into the mouth of the people words expressive of the deepest repentance, and of earnest determination to be forever loyal to Jehovah (2b, 3). To this persistent cry Jehovah responds that he will graciously pardon and will shower upon the God-fearing people blessings hitherto unknown (4-8).

Verse 9 stands by itself as an epilogue to the whole book. Whoever desires to become wise and prudent, let him become acquainted with the oracles of Hosea; from them he may learn that Jehovah's ways are right, and that the destiny of men is determined by their attitude toward the divine will.

Outline.

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Teaching of the Book of Hosea.

It remains now to present the essential points in the conception and teaching of Hosea. The message of Hosea was comprehensive, touching upon the social and political as well as upon the moral and religious situation, and yet the principles underlying his discourses are few and easily discovered.

1. Fundamental in the teaching of the prophet is his conception of the *nature and character of Jehovah.* A lack of the knowledge of Jehovah he considers responsible for the corruption of Israel; to impart a correct knowledge is the prophet's earnest desire. (1) Like Amos, Hosea was a *monotheist.* There is but one God, and he is the God of Israel (ii,

5ff.; viii, 4ff.; xiii, 2; xiv, 3). True, these passages might be interpreted as implying only that Hosea conceived Jehovah to be the one God of Israel, saying nothing about the gods of the other nations. But the manner in which he speaks of Jehovah using the other nations to carry out his purpose (viii, 1 ff., 13; ix, 3) makes it clear that Hosea believes the power and sovereignty of Jehovah to extend over other nations (see also on ix, 2). (2) If Jehovah is the only true God, the maker of heaven and earth, the determiner of the destinies of nations, it follows that he is a God of supreme power, of *omnipotence.* There are, however, no passages in Hosea such as are found in Amos (iv, 13; v, 8, 9, etc.) calling attention to this omnipotence; Hosea assumes it. (3) A more important question was how Jehovah would use this power in dealing with Israel and the other nations. Here again Hosea agrees with Amos in portraying Jehovah as a *holy and righteous God,* the use of whose power is determined by ethical considerations. The Israelites in the days of Hosea and Amos seemed to think that, since Jehovah had chosen them, he would stand by them whatever their attitude and conduct. Both prophets seek to remove this misconception; they teach that Jehovah deals with the nations of the earth, Israel included, according to their attitude toward him; sin he would always punish, even in Israel; righteousness alone could win his favor (xi, 9; viii, 13). (4) A fourth, and perhaps the distinguishing, element in Hosea's conception of Jehovah is the thought that *God is love.* This thought colors all of Hosea's teaching. A favorite expression of Hosea is "loving-kindness" (see on ii, 19). This element is not completely absent from Amos, though the latter never uses the former's favorite word; nevertheless, to Amos Jehovah is primarily the God of righteousness. Amos thinks of him principally as king and judge, Hosea as husband and father, with a love such as a husband may feel for his wife, and such as a father may treasure for his son. In chapters i—iii the sin of Israel is represented as "whoredom" (i, 2; ii, 5, 8); but God has not forsaken his

erring spouse, he loves her as much as ever, and by the manifestation of his love he will win her back into permanent heart union (ii, 19, 20). The greater part of chapters iv—xiv presents a different picture. Jehovah is the father, Israel is the prodigal son; the loving father seeks earnestly to save the wanderer (xi, 1, 8; compare vi, 4).

2. Closely connected with and dependent upon Hosea's conception of Jehovah's character is his conception of *Israel's relation to Jehovah and of the service acceptable to him.* (1) Hosea from beginning to end holds fast to the conviction that *Israel is in a peculiar sense the people of Jehovah.* It has become such through the choice of Jehovah, and the union was cemented by a national covenant, made at the very beginning of Israel's history, that is, at the time of the Exodus (ix, 10; xi, 1-4; xii, 9; xiii, 4). The intimacy of this covenant relation is described under the two figures of marriage (chapters i—iii) and filial relation (xi, 1; compare Exod. iv, 22). A covenant always involves mutual obligations. The obligation taken upon himself by Jehovah was to look after the temporal and spiritual needs of the people; this Jehovah has carefully done throughout Israel's entire history. He has supplied the temporal wants (ii, 8; x, 1-11; xii, 8; xiii, 4-6), and he has done his best to supply their spiritual needs. By the voice of living prophecy and the words of law he has sought to teach and direct them (xi, 1-4; vii, 15; viii, 12; xii, 10). But, alas! Israel has "transgressed" the covenant (vi, 7; viii, 1). Its obligations may be summed up in one word, "faithfulness"; that is, loyalty to the husband, obedience to the father. Israel's transgression also may be summed up in one word, "faithlessness"; the wife followed after paramours (ii, 5); the son disregarded the will of the father as revealed by the prophets and in the law. Passages such as iv, 1; vi, 6; x, 12; xii, 6, call attention to the principal requirements, obedience to which was Israel's duty. Every one of these has been willfully transgressed by the nation from the beginning of its history (ix, 10; x, 9) until the prophet's

days (x, 9; xiii, 2). (For a fuller discussion of the evidences of Israel's faithlessness see p. 19.) Israel having thus persistently disregarded the covenant, Jehovah is compelled to set it aside. "I will drive them out of my house; I will love them no more" (ix, 15; compare ii, 9ff.). (2) Concerning the *service of Jehovah* the common eighth century conception seems to have been that the bringing of offerings and sacrifices met all religious requirements. As a result the service of God came to be regarded as a purely external and formal thing. Against this misapprehension Hosea boldly raised his voice: "I desire goodness and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings" (vi, 6; compare v, 6). The ceremonial was only a means to an end, and therefore secondary; even at its best it could never take the place of pure and undefiled religion; if it ever displaced the weightier matters it became an abomination. In order to secure the divine approbation it must be backed by a right spirit and a pure life. This principle needed to be emphasized by Hosea the more strongly because in his days the ceremonial was far from being at its best; the religious celebrations were accompanied by all manner of excesses (iv, 12ff.; vi, 7ff.). It were better to abolish the sacrifice than to practice these things in the name of religion. Still worse, true Jehovah worship was unknown; it had become mixed with Canaanitish elements; in reality it was a worship of the Baalim, the gods of the Canaanites (ii, 5ff.; iv, 12ff.; viii, 4ff.; ix, 9; xiii, 2). Such insult Jehovah could not endure (ii, 12, 13).

The question has been raised, sometimes, whether Hosea condemned as such the calf worship and the worship at the local shrines; in other words, whether Hosea taught that the worship in the temple at Jerusalem was the only legitimate form of worship. This question cannot be answered dogmatically. Since the calf worship and the worship at the other local sanctuaries were utterly corrupt, it is quite possible that the prophet condemned them simply on account of the accompanying corrupt practices, just as Isaiah (i, 15) condemned prayer not because

he was opposed to prayer, but because the hands lifted up in prayer were stained with blood. On the other hand, a prophet with the keen spiritual insight of Hosea might well go beyond preceding prophets and condemn practices which before were considered perfectly legitimate. Statements such as those contained in viii, 5, and x, 5, certainly indicate that the prophet has a low estimate of the "calves" at Bethel and Dan; his estimate of the entire ceremonial is clearly expressed in vi, 6; surely his conception of the essential religious requirements is not very different from that expressed in Mic. vi, 8.

3. Other characteristic points in the prophet's teaching are connected with his *promises of restoration.* Judgment had become inevitable; the religious, moral, and political apostasy of Israel made it incumbent upon Jehovah to vindicate himself in order that true religion might not be lost to the world. But Jehovah's love is unquenchable; in wrath he will remember mercy. The nation must die, but it will live again. Hosea, like the other prophets, pictures the restoration in the brightest colors. (1) Amos had described the era subsequent to the restoration as one of extreme fertility and prosperity (ix, 13); Hosea expresses a similar hope (ii, 21, 22; xiv, 5-8), but this temporal prosperity is not the supreme goal of our prophet's aspirations. More important to him is the *reëstablishment of a fellowship of life and love with Jehovah,* a fellowship that will make it possible for the divine purpose concerning Israel to be completely realized (ii, 14, 19, 20; xiv, 1-3; compare vi, 1-3). (2) Another truth emphasized by Hosea more than by Amos is the necessity of sincere, heartfelt repentance as a condition of restoration. "Hosea may be accurately styled the first preacher of repentance, yet so thoroughly did he deal with this subject of eternal interest to the human heart that between him and ourselves almost no teacher has increased the insight with which it has been examined or the passion with which it ought to be enforced." But whereas with us repentance, as, indeed, every religious experience, is individual, with the prophet it was

national. The individual element in religion did not receive proper emphasis until more than a century and a half after the time of Hosea. Nevertheless all essential elements of the New Testament conception of repentance are found in the Book of Hosea. To Hosea repentance implied the recognition that all sin was committed against God, a deep sorrow for wrong-doing, and an earnest determination to live henceforth in a manner acceptable to God (xiv, 1-3). Sham repentance Jehovah despises (vi, 4ff.). (3) When Hosea describes the glories of the future *he confines himself to the fortunes of the chosen people.* Some of the prophets expect the subjugation of the outside nations by the redeemed Israel, some their destruction by Jehovah himself, others anticipate their conversion. Hosea is silent concerning their destiny. (4) Another feature demanding attention is the *personal element in his Messianic hope.* Amos, without referring to an individual Messianic king, had announced that the future glory would center around the dynasty of David (ix, 11); Hosea declared that the north and the south would be reunited under "one head" (i, 11), and again, "They shall seek . . . David their king" (iii, 5). That these passages refer to the establishment of the Messianic kingdom cannot be doubted; but commentators are not agreed as to whether the prophet had in mind a person, a second David (Jer. xxx, 9; Ezek. xxiv, 23, 24; xxxvii, 24, 25), or whether "David" is equivalent to "house (dynasty) of David" (Amos ix, 11). The references are perhaps not numerous enough to put the interpretation beyond question, yet it would seem that the personal view is more natural. If so, Hosea is the first prophet to mention the ideal ruler—the Messianic King—in whom center the hopes and anticipations of future generations. The designation *David* may imply an allusion to the character of this king. In the words of Kirkpatrick, "David must mean not merely a prince of David's line, but a second David, one who corresponds to David *as the man after God's own heart,* and who, as is plain from the position he occupies, is to be Jehovah's true representative."

Integrity of the Book.

Only a very general discussion of the question is possible in this connection; for details the student must turn to the comments on the doubtful passages. Whenever the grounds for questioning originality seem sufficiently weighty the subject receives due consideration, and the probable conclusion is stated; silence indicates that the doubts appear unwarranted. Not many years ago the discussion of the integrity of Hosea's prophecy would have occupied little space, because then very few, if any, passages were denied to the prophet. With the advance in critical study the difficulties have increased, and especially since the publication of the commentaries by Wellhausen and Nowack, and the more recent works of Marti and Harper. The last one mentioned enumerates as "the more important of the additions and glosses" the following: i, 1, 7, 9—ii, 1; ii, 2b, 4, 6, 7, 10, 14, 15, 16, 18-23; iii, 5; vi, 11a, b; vii, 4; viii, 1b, 8b, 10-14; ix, 9; x, 3, 4, 10, 14b; xi, 8b, 9a, 10b, 11, 12b; xii, 3b-6, 12, 13; xiv, 1-9. Marti considers as secondary (1) all the references to Judah in i, 1, 7, 10; iv, 15; v, 5, 10, 12, 13, 14; vi, 4, 11; viii, 14; x, 11; xi, 12b; xii, 2a; (2) all promises of restoration, i, 9—ii, 1; ii, 13b-23; iii, 1-5; v, 15—vi, 3, 5b; xi, 10, 11; xiv, 1-9. Besides, he recognizes the presence of a large number of smaller additions and glosses. The lists of these two commentators indicate to what extent textual criticism denies to Hosea passages now found in the book bearing his name. Apart from words and sentences of minor importance the secondary elements are grouped by Harper as follows: 1. References to Judah. 2. Passages picturing the glories of the future. Concerning the first group the reader is directed especially to the comments on i, 7; iv, 15; v, 5. The objections raised against the second group are by no means convincing. The subject is discussed in the introductory remarks to ii, 14-23. The passages under this head are said (1) to be unsuitable for Hosea's situation; (2) to interrupt in an unnatural manner

his threats and announcements of judgment; and (3) to be contrary to Hosea's point of view. That Hosea's time demanded messages of warning and judgment is undoubtedly true, and such messages he did deliver; that promises of future glory might be a proper incentive for the people to change their conduct for the better is equally true. It should be noted that these promises are not unconditional; their fulfillment presupposes repentance and return to God on the part of the people. Why such promises should be unsuitable in the days of Hosea, or contrary to the prophet's point of view, cannot easily be seen. 3. The third group includes, according to Harper, "phrases and sentences of a technical, archæological, or historical character, inserted by way of expansion and explanation." Among others he mentions, "because the shadow thereof is good" (iv, 13); "with their flocks and with their herds" (v, 6); "as in the days of Gibeah" (ix, 9); "for the glory thereof, for it is departed from it" (x, 5). 4. The fourth group includes miscellaneous glosses and interpolations for which, perhaps, no special motive may be discovered; for example, "that they may be cut off" (viii, 4); "how long will it be ere they attain to innocency?" (viii, 5); viii, 10-14, entire; "with my God" (ix, 8), etc. Each of these and similar cases must be examined on its own merits, and whenever it is thought necessary this is done in the commentary. In general it may be said that the reasons advanced against the originality of these verses and phrases are threefold: (1) They might be omitted without disturbing the thought; (2) the poetic meter requires their omission; (3) their connection with the context is not clear; sometimes they even seem to contradict the context. Of these (1) cannot be considered conclusive; (2) will be convincing only to those who believe that the prophetic discourses were arranged originally in the exact metrical and strophical form advocated by President Harper. Those who adhere to a different metrical system may retain some of the passages rejected by him and suggest other textual alterations

as their system may demand. There are those, however, who are not convinced that the metrical and strophical arrangement suggested by President Harper is correct, nor do they consider it proven that the discourses of the Hebrew prophets were originally in *strictly* poetic form. When, for instance, the same author says (p. clxix) that "the analogy of other ancient literature should have suggested long ago the probability that Israel's early prophetic literature was poetry," and then gives as illustrations the Gilgamesh epic of the Babylonians and the Homeric poems of Greece, he seems to have overlooked the fact that these are literary compositions of an entirely different character from the discourses of the Hebrew prophets. The additional statement that in view of the fact that these pieces were spoken rather than sung we might expect "a much larger freedom in form" and "a greater variety," and that this "occasions the chief difference between prophetic poetry and psalm poetry," would perhaps meet the case, provided it carries with it the recognition of sufficient freedom in form; but if such freedom is granted changes in the text for the sake of meter become unnecessary, or, at least, few in number.

That there is in the prophetic books much more poetry than was formerly supposed, and that this recognition is of great value to textual criticism, is not doubted; but that in our present state of uncertainty a hypothetical metrical system may be used as an ultimate criterion by the textual student may be seriously doubted; and one may be justified in refusing to accept passages as secondary which upon this ground alone are denied to Hosea. (3) In view of the statements below even abruptness in transition cannot be regarded as proving conclusively the presence of interpolations. The case against originality may be stronger when actual contradiction exists; but sometimes apparent contradictions are due to the failure to understand and interpret a passage correctly; a correct interpretation often removes the difficulties.

For these reasons one cannot help but feel that the most

recent textual criticism has denied to Hosea more passages than the facts warrant.

The abruptness in transition and apparent lack of logical connection, which exist in Hosea in a more marked degree than in any other Old Testament book, deserve additional consideration. These phenomena are to be accounted for in large part by (1) the corruption of the text; (2) Hosea's peculiar style; (3) the fact that the book does not contain a verbatim reproduction of the discourses, and (4) the fact that the separate utterances are arranged neither in chronological nor in logical order. (3) has already been touched upon (p. 20). If the statement made there is correct, we can readily see how these notes and summaries might have been collected without regard for the logical connection between the separate oracles (4); in fact, there may never have been such connection. That the text of Hosea has suffered in transmission (1) cannot be doubted. Even A. B. Davidson feels compelled to say, "A *multitude* of passages are corrupt, some incurably." Again and again commentators must confess that the translation and interpretation of certain passages are in doubt, and this in many cases is due to corruption of the text (compare iv, 4; vii, 3-7; xi, 7, 12; xii, 1ff., and many more). (2) The style of Hosea has long been recognized as being different from that of any other Old Testament writer. Jerome spoke of it as "consisting of short clauses"; Dr. Pusey describes it aptly in the words, "Each verse forms a whole by itself, like one heavy toll in a funeral knell"; and to this Cheyne adds, "Even the fetters of grammar are almost too much for Hosea's vehement feeling." The last quotation indicates the cause of the abruptness and disconnectedness. Hosea was a man with a sensitive nature; his emotions were stirred profoundly; he could not deliver a stately and dignified discourse; the truths burned in his heart; and in sympathy and anguish he poured out his heart, without any attempt to indicate the logical connection between separate utterances; this the hearers might easily supply.

HOSEA.

CHAPTER I.

THE word of the LORD that came unto Hosea, the son of Beeri, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, *and* Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel. 2 The beginning of the word of the LORD by Hosea. And the LORD said to Hosea, [a]Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for [b]the land hath committed

[a] So chap. 3. 1.—[b] Deut. 31. 16; Psa. 73. 27; Jer. 2. 13; Ezek. 23. 3, etc.

CHAPTER I.

1, 2a. *Title*—intended as a heading for the whole book. On its probable original form, its accord with internal evidence, etc., see pp. 15ff. **Word**—As in Isa. ii, 1 (compare "vision," Isa. i, 1), denotes the substance of the divine revelation, whatever the manner in which it was received (see pp. 14f.). **Jehovah**—Thus the A. R. V. reproduces throughout the entire Old Testament the name of God rendered in A. V. LORD. **Beeri**—Introduction, p. 10. **The beginning of the word of Jehovah by Hosea**—R. V., "When Jehovah spake at the first by Hosea." A. V. is more satisfactory, and is supported by the ancient versions. The words are a new heading, perhaps by Hosea himself, for part of the book; not chapters i–iii (Cheyne), but chapters i, ii. To "beginning" corresponds "again" in iii, 1. **By**—Better, R. V. margin, "with" (Zech. i, 9; Num. xii, 2). In what sense this was the beginning of Hosea's prophetic activity, see Introduction, pp. 15f. The narrative—for such is chapter i—begins with *Jehovah said to Hosea;* it closes with verse 9, in Hebrew the end of chapter i.

HOSEA'S WIFE AND CHILDREN, 2b–9.

The prophet relates how, at the divine command, he took in marriage a *wife of whoredoms*, Gomer the daughter of Diblaim. By her he had three children, to whom he gave names symbolic of the truths he taught: Jezreel, symbolizing the overthrow of the dynasty of Jehu; Lo-ruhamah, announcing that Jehovah will have no more mercy upon Israel; and Lo-ammi, symbolizing the utter rejection of Israel.

2b–5. *The marriage of Hosea and the birth of the first child.* **2. Take. . . a wife**—Common expression for marry. **A wife of whoredoms**—Not harlot, that is, a woman already a sinner, whether in a literal or a spiritual sense (ii, 5), but a woman with deeply rooted tendencies toward unchastity (Introduction, pp. 12ff.). **Children of whoredoms**—Either children inheriting the mother's evil tendencies, or children born of a woman with such tendencies, or both (ii, 4). **The land hath committed** ["doth commit"] **great whoredom**—The reason for leading the prophet into this peculiar experience. By his own domestic life he was to apprehend more clearly the relation of Jehovah to Israel. As the prophet in his later life meditated over his own sad experience he recognized that the affliction came to him from Jehovah to teach him, in order that he might be a teacher of others. That does not mean that he was not a prophet until his eyes were thus opened. He was conscious of a prophetic call when his first son was born, as is clear from the giving of the symbolic name. In fact, he understood the significance of his own domestic experience because he had the prophetic gift. Nevertheless, his experience led him into a deeper ap-

great whoredom, *departing* from the LORD. 3 So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim; which conceived, and bare him a son. 4 And the LORD said unto him, Call his name Jezreel; for yet a little *while*, [c]and I will [1]avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, [d]and will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel.

[c] 2 Kings 10. 11.—[1] Heb. *visit*.—[d] 2 Kings 15. 10, 12.

preciation of the most important phase of his message to the people. Israel, like his wife, had adulterous tendencies; for a while they were restrained, but at the slightest provocation they broke forth. 3. The prophet followed the command. **Gomer**—Various efforts have been made to find a symbolic meaning in this name as well as in that of the father, Diblaim, but without success. Both are to be understood literally. In time a son was born; to him the prophet gave a name symbolic of one important truth he was commissioned to teach. In a similar manner Isaiah gave to his sons the symbolical names *Shear-jashub* and *Maher-shalal-hash-baz* (Isa. vii, 3; viii, 3). There is no reason to suppose that this son was the offspring of adulterous intercourse and that Hosea recognized him as his son "for his mother's sake." It is probable that Hosea did not find out the true character of his wife, or at least the hopelessness of the case, until after the birth of the three children. 4. **Jezreel**—That is, *God sows*. The name was to be given, as the next line shows, not on account of its meaning but on account of its historical connections. Jezreel is the well-known city of that name in the Plain of Jezreel. **Blood**—Or, *blood-guiltiness* (G.-K., 124n); the extinction of the house of Ahab by Jehu, about 842 B. C. (2 Kings ix, x). The name, therefore, points both backward and forward—backward to the crime and forward to the punishment. Not only the dynasty of Jehu is to be destroyed, but also the northern kingdom. The events are thought to be imminent. **Yet a little while**—In this the prophet was not mistaken, for the fulfillment in each case took place within a few years, though not at one time; the former in the assassination of Zechariah by the usurper Shallum (2 Kings xv, 10), the latter in the fall of Samaria and the exile of the northern tribes in 722–721 B. C. (2 Kings xvii). One cannot fail to see that the standpoint of Hosea is not the same as that of 2 Kings x, 30. There Jehu is highly commended for the very act condemned here. How are we to explain the difference? The attempt to prove that Hosea has in mind some other crime is futile. The explanation lies in the advance in religious and ethical conceptions during the intervening century. The character of Jehovah never changes; but the conceptions of his character, even by the inspired prophets, did change and advance. It seems that the prophets of the ninth century had not yet learned "that the cause of truth is not permanently advanced by intrigue and bloodshed," while Hosea is advancing toward the Christian belief that the kingdom of God must be extended by the moral influence going out from the kingdom; a view held also by the author of Isa. ii, 2–4. It should be noted, however, that some deny that Hosea's judgment differed from that of the author of 2 Kings x, 30; and they explain the prophet's condemnation by assuming that he recognized a wrong motive, unnoticed by the historian, behind Jehu's act. "The same historical fact which, if it had proceeded from high motives, would have been praiseworthy as pleasing to God may, if arising from other motives, be unpardonable sin in the sight of God." In addition it is claimed that Jehu went to excess in executing the divine command (2 Kings ix, 27; x, 13, 14). 5. **The valley of Jezreel**—The ancient battlefield of the Hebrews (Judg. iv, 13ff.;

5 [e]And it shall come to pass at that day, that I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel.

6 And she conceived again, and bare a daughter. And *God* said unto him, Call her name [2]Lo-ruhamah: [f]for [3]I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel; [4]but I will utterly take them away. 7 [g]But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save them by the LORD their God, and [h]will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen.

[e] 2 Kings 15. 29.——[2] That is, *Not having obtained mercy.*——[f] 2 Kings 17. 6, 23.——[3] Heb. *I will not add any more to.*

[4] Or, *that I should altogether pardon them.*——[g] 2 Kings 19. 35.——[h] Zech. 4. 6; 9. 10.

vi, 33ff.; vii, 1ff.; 1 Sam. xxix, 1ff.), therefore a proper place for the coming conflict; besides, the crime to be avenged had been committed there. If the LXX. text of 2 Kings xv, 10, is correct Zechariah was slain at Ibleam, which lies in the valley of Jezreel. The final blow, which marked the end of the northern kingdom, was the fall of Samaria. There is no reason for regarding verse 5 as a later insertion (Marti). **Break the bow**—Symbol of military power. The enemy which is to destroy Israel is not named; he can be no other than the Assyrian.

6, 7. *Birth of Lo-ruhamah.* 6. The second child of the union was a daughter. **Lo-ruhamah**—Meaning *She is not pitied,* or *loved;* that is, she does not experience the love which is ordinarily bestowed by parents upon their children. The reason for giving this name is also stated. Israel, the child of Jehovah (xi, 1), is no longer loved or pitied by him to the extent that a child might expect love and pity; but Jehovah has not yet entirely cast off the people (verse 9). **But I will utterly take them away**—Better, with R. V., "that I should in any wise pardon them"; a perfectly legitimate translation (Jer. xii, 1; compare Gen. xl, 15; G.-K., 166b). There is no grammatical necessity for the rendering, "No, rather I will surely pardon them," which Marti makes the basis for omitting the clause as a later addition, because the thought expressed is out of place in this connection. His translation being unwarranted there is no necessity for omitting the words. 7. While Jehovah will not interfere in behalf of Israel, he will have mercy upon the southern kingdom. **Judah**—The prophet seems to think that Judah is in better religious and moral condition than Israel (iv, 15). In reality, judging from the messages of Isaiah and Micah, the two eighth century prophets of Judah, there was little difference between the conditions in the two kingdoms. And if the references to Judah in Hos. v, 5, 10, 12, 13, 14; vi, 4, 11; viii, 14; x, 11; xi, 12 (margin); xii, 2, are from Hosea himself, this prophet seeems to agree with the two Judean prophets. The explanation that i, 7, and iv, 15, come from an earlier period, before Hosea had become properly acquainted with conditions in Judah, is not considered satisfactory by most commentators, since the time elapsed between the delivery of iv, 15, and chapter v, cannot have been very long. It is not without reason, therefore, that many commentators regard verse 7 as a later interpolation, reflecting the experiences of Judah in 701 (2 Kings xix, 35ff; Isa. xxxvii, 36ff.). An additional objection is raised on the ground that the thought of verse 7 is foreign to the rest of the chapter, in which the prophet narrates his own domestic life, and sets forth its significance as illustrating the relation of Israel to Jehovah. **By Jehovah their God**—For the sake of emphasis, instead of *by me;* describes very aptly the deliverance of 701, as a reading of the account in 2 Kings will show. It is the constant teaching of the prophets that Jehovah, and not human defenses, is the salvation of his people (xiv, 3; Isa. vii, 1–17; xxxi, 8; compare ii, 7).

8 Now when she had weaned Lo-ruhamah, she conceived, and bare a son. 9 Then said *God*, Call his name [5]Lo-ammi: for ye *are* not my

[5] That is, *Not my people.*

8, 9. *Birth of Lo-ammi.* 8. The third child was a son. **When she had weaned**—After two or three years, the length of time allowed to elapse in Palestine even now before children are weaned. 9. **Lo-ammi**—That is, *Not my people.* Israel is to be cast off entirely, to be no longer the people of Jehovah. The three names form a climax—*Jezreel* symbolizes a definite judgment; *Lo-ruhamah*, the withdrawal of the divine mercy; *Lo-ammi*, the utter rejection of Israel, its treatment as a foreign nation. **I will not be your God**—Literally, *I will not be for you*, that is, on your side, to help you. The thought remains the same, but the ordinary translation brings it out more strongly. Some manuscripts of the LXX. read "your God," and this is favored by ii, 3 (compare Zech. viii, 8). Perhaps the text has suffered in transmission.

PROMISE OF A GLORIOUS RESTORATION, i, 10–ii, 1.

With verse 9 chapter i closes in the common editions of the Hebrew Bible. The division of the English Bible—found also in some Hebrew texts, in LXX., Luther, Calvin, etc.—is certainly unfortunate, for i, 10–ii, 1, belong close together. But scholars have long disagreed as to the exact relation of these verses to i, 2–9, and ii, 2ff., since the transition from i, 9, to i, 10, and also from ii, 1, to ii, 2, is exceedingly abrupt. Some make i, 10–ii, 1, the continuation of i, 2–9, regarding ii, 1, as the close of the first section; others feeling that the promises of i, 10–ii, 1, following immediately upon the threats in i, 2–9, would take from the latter much of their force, regard the verses as the beginning of the second oracle, which would then begin with a promise (compare Isa. ii, 2–4, a promise followed by threats in ii, 5ff.). But this does not relieve the situation, for the transition from ii, 1, to ii, 2, is at least equally abrupt. As a result, some scholars, seeing in the verses nothing that would militate against the authorship of Hosea and yet recognizing their loose connection with the context, think that the verses have been misplaced. Steiner, Cheyne, and others would place them after ii, 23, A. B. Davidson after iii, 5. The former find some support in Rom. ix, 25, 26, where part of Hos. i, 10, is quoted immediately after ii, 23. This, however, is not conclusive, since Paul might quote verses in any order he chose. The objections to the transposition theory, raised by Nowack, Marti, and others, rest, in part at least, upon misinterpretation of i, 10, 11, and are of little weight. The transition from ii, 23, or iii, 5, would undoubtedly be smoother; but, if the verses were transposed, how, why, and when did it happen? The reply that a later age sought to break the sting of the prophetic denunciations by rearranging the prophecies so that each would end with a promise of a brighter future rests upon mere assumption, and cannot be considered satisfactory. The most recent commentators, Wellhausen, Nowack, Marti, and Harper, take i, 10–ii, 1, to be a later exilic or postexilic addition, made for the purpose just suggested. If so, the later writer must have followed and imitated Hosea very closely, for the verses are clearly dependent in thought and mode of expression on i, 2–9. All one can do is to state the case and the views held; which is the correct one it is impossible to say with any degree of certainty, since the data, indecisive themselves, will appeal with varying force to different readers. So far as the contents are concerned, Hosea might be the author; abrupt transitions are not infrequent in the book; indeed, they are one of its chief characteristics. On the other hand, we know very little about

people, and I will not be your *God*.

10 Yet [i]the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; [k]and it shall come to pass, *that* [6]in the place where it was said unto them, [l]Ye *are* not my people, *there* it shall be said unto them, *Ye are* [m]the sons of the living God. **11** [n]Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land: for great *shall be* the day of Jezreel.

[i] Gen. 32. 12; Rom. 9. 27, 28.—[k] Rom. 9. 25, 26; 1 Pet. 2. 10.—[6] Or, *instead of that*.—[l] Chap. 2. 23.

[m] John 1. 12; 1 John 3. 1.—[n] Isa. 11. 12, 13; Jer. 3. 18; Ezek. 34. 23; 37. 16–24.

the collection of prophetic oracles into books, and it is not unlikely that later additions were made to separate oracles, as well as to whole books, though one may not be ready to go in this matter to the extent to which some modern commentators are inclined. 10. **Yet**—In Hebrew the simple conjunction *and*. **As the sand of the sea**—All the prophets are convinced that from the judgment a remnant will escape, out of which shall rise the new people of God (Isa. vi, 13). In this new nation the promise to the patriarchs (Gen. xxii, 17; xxxii, 12), realized in a very small degree under Solomon (1 Kings iv, 20), will be completely fulfilled. **Israel**—Not the whole nation, but the northern kingdom only, as in 4, 5, 6, 11. **In the place where it was said**—So LXX. and Rom. ix, 26. But, since the important thing is the *fact* and not the *place* of the restoration, the marginal reading, "instead of that which was said," a possible translation of the Hebrew, is to be preferred. **Not my people**—*Lo-ammi* (verse 9). **Sons**—The representation of the relation of the deity to his worshipers as fatherhood is a common idea in Semitic religions. Chemosh has sons and daughters (Num. xxi, 29); the expression is used even of idols of wood and stone (Jer. ii, 27); outside of Israel the expression seems to imply, in the beginning at least, physical relationship; *never* so in Israel. There the basis is an act of mercy on the part of Jehovah; adoption, not generation (xi, 1; compare Exod. iv, 22). The former intimate relation, severed through Israel's rebellion (Isa. i, 2), is to be restored. **Living God**—In contrast with the dead idols, which are unable to do anything for their worshipers. "One of the earliest appearances of prophetic monotheism" (compare Isa. xxxvii, 4; Deut. v, 23). Restoration to sonship will mean a renewal of the divine grace and favor to Israel. 11. **Shall . . . be gathered together**—The common prophetic anticipation that in the new era North and South will be reunited (Isa. xi, 13; Ezek. xxxvii, 22; Zech. ix, 13, etc.). While the tenth century prophets favored the schism (1 Kings xi, 29; xii, 22ff.), later prophets looked upon it as a serious disaster (Isa. vii, 17). **One head**—One common leader (Num. xiv, 4; 1 Sam. xv, 17). Who he will be, whence he will come, is not stated; he is possibly to be identified with "David their king" (iii, 5). **Shall come up out of** ["go up from"] **the land**—If the verses are allowed to retain their present position the words cannot refer to a return from exile; nor can they be interpreted primarily in the sense suggested by Cheyne, "The reconciled people, too numerous for the land to bear them, shall seek to enlarge their territory" (Amos ix, 12; Mic. ii, 12, 13); for before they can enter upon a career of conquest they must regain their former standing. To do this is the purpose of the going up, that is, to battle (Nah. ii, 1; Joel i, 6). **The day of Jezreel**—Not identical with the day of disaster (verse 4), though this verse looks back to it, as ii, 1, looks back to i, 6, 9. It is the very opposite, a day of victory to be won on the old battlefield of Jezreel. If the three verses are placed after iii, 5, *go up* might refer to a

CHAPTER II.

SAY ye unto your brethren, [1]Ammi; and to your sisters, [2]Ruhamah. 2 Plead with your mother, plead: for [a]she *is* not my wife, neither *am* I her husband: let her

[1] That is, *My people.*—[2] That is, *Having obtained mercy.*

[a] Isa. 50. 1.

return from exile (iii, 4), though not necessarily. Then *Jezreel* would better be interpreted in connection with ii, 22, 23, as pointing to the permanent settlement of Israel in the promised land, which will be followed by the transformation indicated in ii, 1. **Great**—Glorious; marked by manifestations of the divine power.

CHAPTER II.

1. With this triumph a new era opens, an era of prosperity and felicity. This transformation warrants the change of the names of ill omen into their direct opposites. **Say ye**—The members of the nation nearest the prophet are to spread the good news to their fellow countrymen. **Ammi**—*My people.* **Ruhamah**—*She is loved,* or *pitied.* As the three names in i, 4, 6, 9, symbolize the utter rejection of Israel, so the names of i, 11, ii, 1, symbolize the complete restoration of the people.

Application of the Symbolic Acts and Names in Chapters I and III—2–23.

Chapters i–iii are not arranged in what appears to be the logical order: chapter iii attaches itself to i, 9; iii, 1, continues the story of Hosea's domestic life. He is told to go and "love a woman beloved of her friend, and an adulteress." Marti thinks, but without good reason, that this act is entirely independent of chapter i. The symbolism would be destroyed if the woman of iii, 1, were any other than Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim (i, 3). *Lo-ammi* (i, 9) suggests the step in the domestic drama which is left unrecorded. The woman had fled from her home to give herself more freely to her shameful practices; iii, 2 seems to imply that she had become the slave concubine of another. Hosea, impelled by love and a divine impulse, buys her back, though for a while he does not restore her to the full privileges of wifehood (iii, 3).

This entire history is presupposed in ii, 2–23; iii, 4, 5, which sections contain the application of the prophet's own experience to the history of Israel. The historical persons in i, 2–9, and iii, 1–3, the prophet, his wife, his children, here become allegorical figures. Israel is the adulterous wife, Jehovah the deceived but still loving husband; the individual Israelites are the children. Some of the latter have remained free from the sins of their mother. To these Jehovah addresses himself, that they should attempt the restoration of the faithless wife and mother, Israel, to the wronged but yearning husband, Jehovah. The utterance opens with a description of Israel's whoredom (ii, 5), which is followed by an announcement of the evil consequences of the faithlessness (6–13); it closes with a delineation of the efforts to be put forth by Jehovah to win back the faithless wife, and of the glories awaiting her when she comes to her senses (14–23).

The faithlessness of Israel, 2–5.

2. **Plead** ["Contend"]—The urgency of the appeal is indicated by its repetition. The individual Israelites who are still sensitive to the divine influence are addressed; they are urged to "exert a corrective, reforming influence on the corrupt aggregate" in order to avoid more serious consequences. The nation is called their **mother**—Out of love to her they should work for her best interests. **She is not my wife, neither am I her husband**—The marriage tie is already dissolved through her whoredom; and unless she repents there is no reason why she should not be utterly cast off. **Out of her sight**—Literally *from her face;* as the next clause shows, to be understood literally. The expres-

therefore put away her [b]whoredoms out of her sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts; 3 Lest [c]I strip her naked, and set her as in the day that she was [d]born, and make her [e]as a wilderness, and set her like a dry land, and slay her with [f]thirst. 4 And I will not have mercy upon her children; for they *be* the [g]children of whoredoms. 5 [h]For their mother hath played the harlot: she that conceived them hath done shamefully: for she said, I will go after my lovers, [i]that give

[b] Ezek. 16. 25.——[c] Jer. 13. 22, 26; Ezek. 16. 37, 39.——[d] Ezek. 16. 4.——[e] Ezek. 19. 13.

[f] Amos 8. 11, 13.——[g] John 8. 41.——[h] Isa. 1. 21; Jer. 3. 1, 6, 8, 9; Ezek. 16. 15, 16, etc. [i] Verses 8, 12; Jer. 44. 17.

sion of the countenance reveals the character (Jer. iii, 3). **Adulteries from between her breasts**—Interpreted by some as referring to the wearing of amulets between the breasts in honor of the deities with whom the Israelites committed adultery; but of such a custom we have no knowledge. It is better understood as another bold expression of her adulterous character, the shameless uncovering of the breast. Another possible interpretation is to regard the abstract *adultery* used for the concrete *adulterer*, a usage not uncommon in Hebrew. The adulterer who lies between the breasts (Song of Songs i, 13) is to be driven away. 3. If this is not done she must suffer the consequences of her wrongdoing. **Lest I strip her naked**—Seems to have been one way of punishing an adulteress (Ezek. xvi, 38, 39). **As in the day that she was born**—At the time of the Exodus; then Israel had nothing. All she acquired subsequently she owed to Jehovah; but if she continues in her disloyalty to him he will withdraw his support, and she will relapse into a state of complete destitution. **Wilderness**—In punishment for Israel's adulteries the land will be robbed of its glory and fertility; the fruitful fields will be turned into a dreary desert. The same thought is expressed in the next clause: as a result of drought the land will become utterly desolate. People and land are not kept apart; both will suffer.

The last clause of verse 3 should be combined with the first clause of verse 4. **And slay her with thirst**—The final punishment of an adulteress was death (Lev. xx, 10; Deut. xxii, 22; Ezek. xvi, 40). In this case Israel, or rather the land, will perish of thirst, that is, drought. **Her children**—The inhabitants of the land must share in the punishment of the mother, because they are *children of whoredoms*. As said above, the children are the individual Israelites; in their individual capacity they manifest the same tendencies as the nation as a whole. The phrase, therefore, means not simply children born of a mother with unchaste tendencies, but children possessing such tendencies, and indulging in unchaste practices.

The guilt of Israel is described further in verse 5; the verse thus supplies the ground for the earnest appeal in verse 2. **Played the harlot**—Openly she violated her obligations to Jehovah; such conduct is rightly called *shameful*. It was also premeditated; deaf to all exhortations, she declared firmly, **I will go after my lovers**—Or, *paramours*. By these are meant not the surrounding nations, but the Baalim (verse 13), the gods of the native Canaanites. Among the latter no supreme deity seems to have been worshiped; separate districts each had its own deity. The worship of these probably arose in connection with agriculture. "The local Baals fertilized each his own district by his streams and springs, and hence they were the owners—this is the meaning of the term Baal—of these naturally fertile spots." In time they were regarded also as the spenders of rain; and the Baals were worshiped as the givers of fertility and prosperity. When the Israelites came into the land they, though nominally continuing to worship Jehovah, were to some extent influenced by the natives, so that they came to see in these Baalim

me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my [3]drink.

6 Therefore, behold, [k]I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and [4]make a wall, that she shall not find her paths. **7** And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find *them:* then shall she say, [l]I will go and return to my [m]first husband; for then *was it* better

[3] Heb. *drinks.*——[k] Job 3. 23; 19. 8; Lam. 3. 7, 9.——[4] Heb. *wall a wall.*

[l] Chap. 5. 15; Luke 15. 18.——[m] Ezek. 16. 8.

the givers of "every good and perfect gift," and to pay them the homage belonging exclusively to Jehovah. Herein consisted their whoredom which the prophet condemns. The Baal against whom Elijah fought was an entirely different deity. Several products are enumerated as being ascribed to the power of the Baalim. These, the most important, are only samples; everything else was thought to come from them. **Bread**—Food. **Water**—Because of its scarcity prized very highly by an agricultural people. **Wool and flax**—From which clothing was made. **Oil**—See on Joel i, 10. **Drink**—Literally, *drinks.* Wine and other drinks made of fruit, such as dates, figs, raisins. Food, clothing, and articles of luxury were all traced to the Baalim. For this disloyalty to Jehovah Israel must be punished. Jehovah must vindicate himself.

The evil consequences and punishment of Israel's faithlessness, 6–13.

6, 7. **I will hedge up**—Israel will be like a wanderer whose progress is suddenly hindered by a thorn hedge. **Thy way**—The change to the second person might perhaps be explained as due to the intense emotion of the prophet; LXX. and Peshitto read the third person. **A wall**—Better, with R. V., "a wall against her"; is to accomplish the same thing as the hedge (Job iii, 23; xix, 8; Lam. iii, 7–9). Thus obstructed she cannot find her way to her paramours. How Jehovah will wall up the way is stated in 9ff. When Jehovah strikes the blow the Baalim will be helpless. **Follow . . . seek**—In both cases the intensive form of the verb: follow earnestly, seek diligently. She will leave no means untried to reach her paramours, that they may help her out of the distress and renew her prosperity. **Not overtake . . . find**—Her efforts will not produce the desired results. **Then**—When she becomes conscious of the hopelessness of the situation. She will be brought to her senses (Luke xv, 17), and will decide to return to her **first husband**—The God worshiped by the fathers. **Then**—Before Israel began the worship of the Baalim. **Now**—Not at the time of the prophet's speaking, but in the future when Israel sees the awfulness of the calamity, when the distress described in 9ff. becomes a reality. With this conception, that calamity and disloyalty to Jehovah are closely connected, compare 2 Kings xvii, 7ff. The decision to return can hardly be regarded as expressive of repentance (Jer. iii, 21ff.); all that is implied is anxiety to escape the distress.

Verse 5 describes the sin and its cause; 6, 7 announce the judgment in figurative language; 9–13 expound the figurative announcement. The exposition is preceded by a restatement of the facts that make necessary the judgment. This arrangement of the thought is not unnatural; and there seems insufficient reason for rejecting 6, 7 as a later interpolation, or for placing these verses after verse 13, so as to bring together 5 and 8, though the latter would make a good continuation of the former. There is no good reason even for rejecting 7b, to which Marti takes exception as interrupting the connection and emphasizing repentance and conversion concerning which 8ff. are silent. If the arrangement is interpreted as just suggested the connection is not broken, and, properly interpreted, nothing is said about repentance or

with me than now. 8 For she did not [n]know that [o]I gave her corn, and [5]wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, [e]*which* they prepared for Baal. 9 Therefore will I return, and [p]take away my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof, and will [7]recover my wool and my flax *given* to cover her nakedness. 10 And now [q]*will* I discover her [8]lewdness in the sight of her lovers, and none shall deliver

[n] Isa. 1. 3.—[o] Ezek. 16. 17, 18, 19.—[5] Heb. *new wine.*—[e] Or, wherewith *they made Baal*, chap. 8. 4.—[p] Verse 3.

[7] Or, *take away.*—[q] Ezek. 16. 37; 23. 29.—[8] Heb. *folly*, or, *villainy.*

conversion. 8. **For**—Hebrew, "and." **She**—The use of the Hebrew pronoun before the verb places special emphasis upon the same: "she, though my wife and enjoying countless blessings." **Did not know**—To know is often used in the sense of *acknowledge;* it may be so here; in life and worship they failed to acknowledge; but the prophet may think of the absence of intellectual apprehension that Jehovah was the source of all blessing. **Corn**—(or *grain*), . . . ["new"] **wine, . . . oil**—The chief products of Canaan (Deut. vii, 13; xi, 14; see on Joel i, 10). **Silver and gold, which they prepared** ["used"] **for Baal**—The possession of silver and gold imported from afar was, in a sense, also due to the divine favor (compare Isa. ii, 7); the Israelites, failing to recognize the true source, used them—that the relative clause belongs to both nouns seems evident—for Baal: that is, in his honor; either they made more beautiful and splendid his worship or, as the margin R. V. reads, "they made the silver and gold into the Baal," that is, images of Baal. In view of viii, 4, the latter may be preferable (Isa. xliv, 17). Several commentators reject the relative clause entirely because (1) the plural *they used* is peculiar. Who is the subject? Throughout this section Israel is referred to as *she;* (2) the singular *Baal.* Hosea seems to condemn throughout the worship of the Canaanitish *Baalim* (ii, 5) and not that of the one Baal, the god of Tyre; (3) the emphasis is on the giving by Jehovah, not on the use of the blessings for any specific purpose. Marti would go further and omit also "gold," because of the peculiar order of the words in Hebrew, where *silver* and *gold* are not connected. Objection (3) is of no weight. The other peculiarities cannot be overlooked, though opinions may differ as to whether they are sufficiently serious to warrant the rejection of the words.

Verses 9ff., parallel with 6, 7, announce the judgment. **Therefore will I return, and take away**—Equivalent to *take away again;* R. V., "take back." **Corn . . . wine . . . . wool . . . flax**—See verses 5, 8. In verse 5 Israel had called these things *my* bread, etc. Here Jehovah suggests that in reality they are his. **Time . . . season thereof**—That is, at harvest time, when under ordinary conditions men may safely expect them. **Given to cover** ["which should have covered"] **her nakedness**—A reminder that without God's mercy, in her natural condition, "Israel was utterly helpless and destitute." 10. By withholding the crops at the time when the people might expect them Jehovah will show that it is he, and he alone, who controls the forces of nature, and not the Baalim (verse 5); the latter will be absolutely helpless. **Lewdness**—R.V. margin, "shame"; carries further in figurative language the announcement of verse 9. With the flax and wool, intended for covering, gone, the woman—here Israel—will stand exposed naked. **In the sight of her lovers**—The thought is not that, seeing her thus, they will begin to abhor and despise her, but rather that, though it is done in their very presence, they will be unable to help her (compare Isa. i, 7). The Baalim never have done anything, and their helplessness will become self-evident when Jehovah strikes the blow. No

her out of mine hand. **11** [r]I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her [s]feast days, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts. **12** And I will [g]destroy her vines and her fig trees, [t]whereof she hath said, These *are* my rewards that my lovers have given me: and [u]I will make them a forest, and the beasts of the field shall eat them. **13** And I will visit upon her the days of Baalim, wherein she burned incense to them,

[r] Amos 8. 10.—[s] 1 Kings 12. 32; Amos 8. 5.—[g] Heb. *make desolate.*—[t] Verse 5.

[u] Psa. 80. 12, 13; Isa. 5. 5.

one can rescue Israel. If this were the only reference in Hosea to the worship of other gods one might be led to think that Hosea believed in their existence though he considered them less powerful than Jehovah; but compare iv, 5, and xiv, 3.

11. An inevitable result of the calamity will be the cessation of **mirth**—As the context shows, the merry-making in connection with religious celebrations. **Feast days** ["feasts"]—The same word as the Arabic *haj*, by which the pilgrimage to Mecca is known. Probably not feasts in general, but the three great feasts—of Unleavened Bread, of Harvest, of Ingathering—which were accompanied by pilgrimages (Exod. xxiii, 14–17); these were occasions of rejoicing (Isa. xxx, 29). **New moons**—The *new moon*, the first of the month, was from the earliest time a sacred day among the Hebrews and their neighbors (1 Sam. xx, 5; 2 Kings iv, 23). Its celebration goes back probably to a period when the moon was worshiped as a divine being. (See article "New Moon" in Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible.*) **Sabbaths**—Another day considered sacred from the earliest period; its observance is enjoined in the Decalogue, but it is not confined to the Hebrews. (See *American Journal of Theology*, 1898, pp. 312–352.) According to Amos viii, 5, on the two sacred days mentioned last the people abstained from common labor. **Solemn feasts** ["assemblies"]—Better, *festal gatherings;* a general term for festive seasons, including here all the feasts not mentioned previously (compare Amos viii, 10; Jer. vii, 34; Lam. i, 4; v, 15).

Verse 12 is the natural continuation of 9. Nowack, who considers verse 10 a later addition, thinks the original order to have been 9, 12, 11, 13. **Vines . . . fig trees**—Two of the choicest products of Palestine; their destruction would be a serious calamity (see on Joel i, 7). Since they grew extensively and luxuriously, they were regarded as indicating in a special manner the favor of the Baalim. **Rewards** ["hire"]—The compensation offered to the prostitute. How Jehovah will destroy is not stated, it may be by war or by drought. The gardens and orchards will be neglected and turn into **forests**—Better, *jungles*, the abode of wild beasts. **Beasts of the field**—Wild, undomesticated beasts (compare Isa. vii, 23–25). On the rapidity with which in the neglected fields wild animals multiply, see 2 Kings xvii, 25.

13. The conclusion of this section of the prophecy. All the judgments threatened are the result of Israel's faithlessness. **I will visit**—As frequently in the Old Testament, equivalent to *punish.* **Days of** ["the"] **Baalim**—Not special religious feast days celebrated in honor of the Baalim, but the feast days enumerated in verse 11. Nominally the Israelites continued to worship Jehovah; in reality he had been displaced from his preëminence and placed on a level with the Canaanitish deities. A worship permeated with Canaanitish elements could not be acceptable to Jehovah; therefore the feast days were not sacred to Jehovah, but to the Baalim, and might properly be called *days of the Baalim.* **Wherein** ["unto which"] **she burned incense**—A. V. is to be preferred; the days on which she burned incense to them. The verb is used in the later period in the narrower sense of *burn incense;* here,

and she [x]decked herself with her earrings and her jewels, and she went after her lovers, and forgat me, saith the LORD.

[x] Ezek. 23. 40, 42.

as in iv, 13; xi, 2; Amos iv, 5, it means *offer sacrifice* in general. **Earrings**—Or, *nose* ring; since the noun is in the singular, preferably the latter. **Jewels**—The reference is not to special decorations to attract the paramours, but to the common custom of attiring one's self in the best garments and decorating one's self with all kinds of ornaments on holy days. Compare the expression in the Koran, "In the day of ornament," that is, the festival, and the Arabic saying, "When the feast with its noise is past everyone puts on his own rags again." **She . . . forgat me**—The Baalim alone were in her mind (verse 8). Had the Israelites thought of Jehovah at all they would have seen the absurdity of attempting to harmonize the worship of Jehovah with that of the Baalim.

The disciplinary effects of the judgment and the future exaltation of Israel, 14–23.

In this section appears a very marked change in the tone of the prophet. From threats he passes abruptly to promises. To some commentators (Nowack, Marti, Harper) this abruptness seems a sufficient reason for denying these verses to Hosea. But the sufficiency of this reason is not beyond question. Judgment, according to the teaching of the prophets, has always a disciplinary purpose. In verses 6, 9ff., Hosea has announced the judgment necessary to bring the people to their senses; but Jehovah still loves his faithless spouse. When he has succeeded in making her again sensitive to his influences he will once more pour upon her expressions of his love, just as the prophet did upon his wife (iii, 1–3). If we have regard for the line of thought presented in chapters i–iii (see general remarks on ii, 2–23), and if we take ii, 14–23, as the continuation of ii, 6–13, rather than as parallel to the same, these verses find a natural interpretation. That the emphasis should be first upon the terrors of the judgment is natural in view of the sins of the people; that the prophet should point to future glory is in perfect accord with what seems to be the ordinary line of prophetic reasoning; and, far from breaking the force of the prophetic warnings, the promises would supply a very strong incentive to become worthy of the promised blessings. Moreover, an unbiased interpretation can see no contradiction between ii, 14–23, and chapters ivff., where the prophet emphasizes repentance as an essential condition of the divine favor. It goes almost without saying that the fulfillment of all Old Testament promises was dependent upon the proper attitude toward Jehovah. The verses before us touch upon one side only, namely, the part played by Jehovah. Surely it is not necessary to emphasize the condition every time a promise is made. Nor is there, as is sometimes asserted, any difference between the thought of these verses and that of chapter iii. Again, similarities with Ezekiel are not striking enough to prove the dependence of these verses upon any utterance of this exilic prophet.

The modern tendency, to regard practically all Messianic prophecies as the products of the exilic or postexilic period, is without adequate foundation. It is almost inconceivable that the preëxilic prophets, with their lofty conception of the character of Jehovah, should have no message but that of doom. Their very conception of the righteousness of Jehovah made it impossible for them to believe that judgment could be his last word. There must be something beyond for those who remained faithful. The

14 Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and [y]bring her into the wilderness, and speak [10] comfortably unto her. 15 And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and [z]the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in [a]the days of her youth, and [b]as in the

[y] Ezek. 20. 35.——[10] Heb. *to her heart*, or, *friendly*.

[z] Josh. 7. 26; Isa. 65. 10.——[a] Jer. 2. 2; Ezek. 16. 8, 22, 60.——[b] Exod. 15. 1.

promises of the prophets as found in their books, including the passage before us, are no more than one should expect from men with their lofty religious conceptions. The possibility of interpolations may, indeed, not be denied, but these must be determined on other grounds than their Messianic character. Until more convincing evidence to the contrary is offered we may safely interpret these verses as coming from Hosea, and as the natural continuation of verses 6–13.

14–17. Israel will be restored to the intimate fellowship with Jehovah enjoyed in the beginning. **Therefore**—In view of the general situation, as described in verses 2–13. It requires divine interference. *Therefore* might, however, be connected only with the last clause of verse 13. Because Israel has forgotten me, therefore *I*—that the emphasis is on Jehovah's efforts is indicated by the use of the separate pronoun with the verb form—must reveal myself to her and thus win her back. **Behold, I will**—According to G.-K., 116p, the construction points to the immediate future as the time of fulfillment; equivalent to *I am about to do*. **Allure**—G. A. Smith, "woo her." The verb is used here in a good sense. Whatever Jehovah does is done for the purpose of winning back the faithless wife. The prophet says nothing about the means of persuasion; evidently he has in mind the judgment which will accomplish that which pleasanter means have failed to do. **Bring her into the wilderness**—The figure is that of Israel's early wanderings in the desert (compare also verse 15). But the question arises, whether the prophet has in mind an actual deportation into the wilderness, that is, an exile (Ezek. xx, 35), or whether the removal into the desert is only a picture of the complete desolation of the land, such as is described in verses 6ff. Verses 21–23 and iii, 4, have sometimes been thought to favor the first interpretation; the former passage is ambiguous, the latter is more readily interpreted as implying an exile, but even its meaning is not beyond question. At any rate, iii, 4, does not necessarily determine the interpretation of this verse; verses 6–13 certainly favor the second view. **Speak comfortably unto her**—Literally, *speak unto her heart*. "To every Israelite some of these terms must have brought back the days of his own wooing. *I will speak home to her heart* is a forcible expression like the German 'an das Herz,' or the sweet Scottish 'it com' up roond my heart,' and was used in Israel as from man to woman when he won her" (compare Isa. xl, 1). With Israel reduced to its ancient poverty, and through such reduction persuaded to listen to the divine voice, a new beginning is to be made, while Jehovah's blessings will fall in abundance.

15. **From thence**—As soon as Jehovah has succeeded in speaking to her heart, as soon as she has come to her senses and is ready to appreciate the intimate relation formerly enjoyed, she will be led forth from the wilderness, and immediately upon leaving—from thence—the vineyards, which had been taken away (verse 12), will be restored. **Valley of Achor**—The place where Achan was stoned (Josh. vii, 26), meaning "valley of troubling." A very disheartening experience in the early days of the conquest. This is to become a **door of hope**—The first Israelites entered upon the conquest of the promised land with a disheartening experience. Not so the restored community; the first experiences will be bright, an earnest

day when she came up out of the land of Egypt. **16** And it shall be at that day, saith the LORD, *that* thou shalt call me [11]Ishi; and shalt call me no more [12]Baali. **17** For [c]I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name. **18** And in that day will I make a [d]covenant for them with the beasts

[11] That is, *My husband.*—[12] That is, *My lord.*—[c] Exod. 23. 13; Josh. 23. 7; Psa. 16. 4; Zech. 13. 2.

[d] Job 5. 23; Isa. 11. 6–9; Ezek. 34. 25.

of the good things to come. **Sing**—R. V., "make answer." If the translation of A. V. is correct the allusion is probably to the song of triumph in Exod. xv. That was sung in her youth—The time of the Exodus (xi, 1). The new Exodus will again fill her heart with singing. The verb is literally "answer," and might be used of the antiphonal singing (compare Exod. xv, 21). In this connection antiphonal singing seems to be out of place; yet R. V. is to be preferred. Israel, seeing the renewed mercies of Jehovah, will respond to the divine love as formerly. This interpretation gives an acceptable sense (compare verses 21, 22), but leaves a grammatical peculiarity. To remove this Buhl suggests changing one letter of the verb, so that it will read, "and she shall go up thither"—to the door of hope—as she did at the time of the Exodus.

As a result of this reëstablished union Israel's tendency to turn to the Baalim will be eradicated. This is the thought of verses 16, 17. It would remain the thought of 17 even if 16 should be an interpolation. The chief objection to verse 16 Wellhausen expresses as follows: "Was Jehovah addressed at any time by Israel as *Baali*—my Master? Does Hosea really hope that instead he will now be addressed as *Ishi*—my husband?" **Baali**—Originally a common noun, meaning *master, lord,* and even *husband;* as such it might legitimately be applied to Jehovah. The present religious condition in Israel showed how difficult it was to maintain the proper distinction between Jehovah and the Baalim of the land. This confusion was increased by the application of the ambiguous *Baal* to Jehovah. As Von Orelli says, "In every age ambiguous language has helped to distort religion." In the regenerated future all religious danger must be removed, including the application of the name *Baal,* obnoxious to Jehovah only because of its association with foreign cults. This feeling is also responsible for the change of proper names such as *Ish-baal* (1 Chron. viii, 33; ix, 39) into *Ish-bosheth* (2 Sam. ii, 8; iii, 7). **Ishi**—*My husband,* with practically the same meaning as *Baali;* it is to be substituted because it is without unpleasant associations. That the Baalim are to be forgotten is taught in verse 17; verse 16 is an attempt to express the same truth in a vivid and forceful manner, and a literal interpretation need not be pressed. The objection of Wellhausen, indorsed by Marti, is therefore not convincing. The latter weakens the text by emending it so as to read, "And it shall be at that day, saith Jehovah, that she shall call to her husband (that is, Jehovah) and she shall not call to her Baalim." **At that day**—When the old-time relation becomes reëstablished. The change in person, from third to second and back to third, due to emotion and excitement, is not uncommon in prophetic discourse (G.-K., 144p). **Names of** ["the"] **Baalim**—The proper names of the various Baalim are not known; they were distinguished from one another by the addition of the name of their special locality (ix, 10). **Remembered**—Better, with R. V., "mentioned" (Exod. xxiii, 13; Zech. xiii, 2).

18–23. Picture of the ideal future to be realized by the restored wife. Verse 18 speaks of permanent peace, undisturbed by man and beast. Cove-

of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and *with* the creeping things of the ground: and [e]I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to [f]lie down safely. **19** And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. **20** I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and [g]thou shalt know

[e] Psa. 46. 9; Isa. 2. 4; Ezek. 39. 9, 10; Zech. 9. 10.

[f] Lev. 26. 5; Jer. 23. 6.——[g] Jer. 31. 33, 34; John 17. 3.

nant—Requires two parties, who take upon themselves mutual obligations; here the emphasis is upon the obligation laid by Jehovah upon the beasts to abstain from injuring men. **Beasts of the field**—These do damage to field and crop, and even to men (ii, 12). **For them**—For their good. **Fowls** ["birds"]—Must refer chiefly to birds of prey. **Creeping things**—Again especially those hostile to man and his possessions. The conditions enjoyed in the Garden of Eden will be restored. A similar hope is expressed in Isa. xi, 6–9. Both passages are to be interpreted as poetic presentations of the truth that the regeneration of human society is to be accompanied by a restoration of the harmony of creation (Rom. viii, 19–22). That this will be fulfilled in a broad sense is certainly to be expected. To what extent a literal fulfillment will take place, or whether the prophet expected a literal fulfillment in every detail, is uncertain. A somewhat different expectation is expressed in Ezek. xxxiv, 25. Why the reference to birds and creeping things should be considered a later insertion is not clear. **Bow . . . sword**—The war implements of Israel's enemies will be broken; the result will be a cessation of troublesome wars. **Out of the earth**—Better, R. V., "land," that is, of Israel. **Safely**—Nothing will mar the God-given peace.

Verses 19, 20 describe the complete restoration of Israel to its former relationship with Jehovah; the new union will be more permanent and spiritual. The picture is that of a pure, inviolable betrothal covenant of love. The initiative throughout is taken by Jehovah. **Betroth thee**—Repeated three times for emphasis. The former union was completely dissolved by the wife's adulteries. A second marriage had to be preceded by a new betrothal. **For ever**—Implies a transformation in the bride, who had broken the former covenant; she will do so no more (Isa. liv, 8–10; Ezek. xvi, 60). The attributes enumerated form a bond of union between Israel and Jehovah. That these attach only to Jehovah's part in the transaction is not true; they are rather the "future adornment of the bride through which such a complete and lasting union is brought about." Certainly the manifestation of the same virtues on the part of Jehovah is implied, since in man they are only a reflection of the character of God. It was the lack of these very virtues that brought about the break (iv, 1ff.; v, 11; vi, 4, 5, etc.). **Righteousness**—Subjective righteousness; the right state of mind and heart. **Judgment** ["justice"]—Frequently connected with the preceding; it marks the objective side of the same; conduct in accord with a right attitude of mind and heart. **Loving-kindness**—A favorite word with Hosea; is used to express (1) the loving attitude of Jehovah to his people; (2) the loving attitude of the people toward Jehovah; and (3) man's loving attitude toward his fellows as a reflection of the divine love. The third idea seems most prominent here (iv, 1; vi, 4, 6; x, 12; xii, 6; compare Mic. vi, 8). G. A. Smith renders "leal love," because the Hebrew words "means always not merely an affection, but a relation loyally observed." **Mercies**—Compassion for the helpless and undeserving. **Faithfulness**—The same word is translated in Hab. ii, 4,

the LORD. 21 And it shall come to pass in that day, [h]I will hear, saith the LORD, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; 22 And the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; [i]and they shall hear Jezreel. 23 And [k]I will sow her unto me in the earth; [l]and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I [m]will say to *them which were* not my people, Thou *art* my people; and they shall say, *Thou art* my God.

[h] Zech. 8. 12.—[i] Chap. 1. 4.—[k] Jer. 31. 27; Zech. 10. 9.—[l] Chap. 1. 6.

CHAPTER III.

THEN said the LORD unto me, [a]Go yet, love a woman beloved of *her* [b]friend, yet an adulteress, ac-

[m] Chap. 1. 10; Zech. 13. 9; Rom. 9. 26; 1 Pet. 2. 10.—[a] Chap. 1. 2.—[b] Jer. 3. 20.

"faith" (see comment there). **Thou shalt know Jehovah**—In general it may be said that Hosea and the other prophets taught that the real secret of the nation's sin was an absence of the true knowledge of Jehovah. On the other hand, a moral transformation presupposes a knowledge of Jehovah, not purely intellectual, but based on a living experience. This latter will be the possession of Israel. (Compare *Methodist Review*, July–August, 1904, pp. 579ff.)

21, 22. Another feature of the future blessedness will be the extreme fertility of the soil (Amos ix, 13; Joel iii, 18). The promise in these verses presents a contrast to verses 9, 12, and a continuation of 18a. When the judgment has done its work Jehovah will restore prosperity in a more abundant measure. The thought is expressed very beautifully under the picture of perfect harmony between the physical and spiritual spheres. Jehovah will no longer restrain the powers of nature from doing their work for the blessing of Israel. "Israel asks its plants to germinate; they call upon the earth for its juices; the earth beseeches heaven for rain; heaven supplicates for the divine word which opens its stores, and Jehovah responds in faithful love." **Hear**—Better, R. V., "answer," or "respond," as the call comes. The curse threatened in 9ff. is removed. **Jezreel**—Used in i, 4, for its historical associations; here on account of its meaning, *God sows*. Why the name is applied to Israel is shown in verse 23: **I will sow**—Establish permanently. **In the earth**—As in verse 18, better, "land." **Unto me**—Not unto the Baalim. Thus the first name symbolic of doom (i, 4) is transformed into one of promise. The same will take place with the others. Loruhamah (i, 6) will again experience the divine favor and mercy; and Lo-ammi (i, 9) will again become the people of God. This transformation in fortune is not wrought arbitrarily; it is based upon the inner transformation described in verses 19, 20. **Thou art my God**—Forever they are cured from running after the Baalim; Jehovah alone they will recognize as their God.

CHAPTER III.

RESTORATION OF THE OUTCAST WIFE AND OF THE OUTCAST PEOPLE, 1–5.

In the introductory remarks to ii, 2–23, it was stated that chapter iii is the natural continuation of i, 1–9; it is so, however, not in the sense that the events recorded in iii, 1ff., followed immediately upon the birth of Lo-ammi (i, 9), for in chapter i nothing is said about the departure of Gomer from the house of Hosea, which is presupposed in iii, 1. The connecting link is easily supplied. Gomer is thought to have fled from her husband's home, evidently to devote herself more freely to her shameful practices; verse 2 seems to imply that she had become the slave concubine of another. Impelled by love and a divine impulse the prophet proceeds to buy her back.

1. **Go yet** ["again"]—Connects this command with the one in i, 2 (Zech. i, 17; xi, 15). **Love**—As verse 2

cording to the love of the LORD toward the children of Israel, who look to other gods, and love flagons [1]of wine. 2 So I bought her to me for fifteen *pieces* of silver, and *for* an homer of barley, and an [2]half

[1] Heb. *of grapes.*—[2] Heb. *lethech.*

shows, practically equivalent to *take a wife* (i, 2); the verb is selected because the emphasis throughout is upon the love of Jehovah, and to indicate the character of the new union. By his love the prophet is to overcome the evil tendencies. **A woman**—The symbolism, the form of expression, and every other consideration make it certain that this woman is Gomer. Were it another the symbolic act would suggest that Jehovah was about to select another spouse in the place of Israel, which is contrary to the thought of Hosea. **Beloved of her friend**—Or simply, *of another.* Though she is fickle, and readily accepts the love of another, the prophet is to take her back. LXX. reads the active participle "loving," which gives good sense; but *evil* for *a friend* is no improvement. **Adulteress**—Such she had become by allowing others to bestow their love upon her. The task imposed upon the prophet was indeed great. **According to the love of Jehovah toward** ["even as Jehovah loveth"]**the children of Israel**—The prophet forgave his faithless wife because Jehovah forgave his faithless spouse, Israel; the attitude of Jehovah taught the prophet his own duty in the matter. It is undoubtedly equally true that his own domestic experience enabled Hosea to understand more completely the attitude of Jehovah to his people, an attitude of intense love, though they look to **other gods**—That is, the Baalim (ii, 5, 13). **Flagons of wine**—More correctly, R. V., "cakes of raisins"; literally, *of (dried) grapes.* These are loved not by the gods, but by the Israelites. The reference is to cakes used in connection with the sacrifices (Jer. vii, 18), partly as offerings to the deity and partly in the feasts accompanying some of the sacrifices. Of this luxury the Israelites were fond; this fondness is used here as illustrating their love for things connected with the worship of the Baalim.

2. The command is carried out. **I bought her**—The woman described in verse 1. Why he had to buy her back is not stated, nor is it quite clear. It may have been simply to avoid an altercation with the paramour, or because she had become a slave. Pusey and others suggest that the verb does not imply purchase, but refers to some arrangement on the part of the prophet to provide for the temporary maintenance—until he might restore her to wifehood—of Gomer, whom he found in destitute circumstances, though not in the possession of another. This explanation would remove the necessity of assuming that Gomer had become a slave; it would make natural also the mention of barley, which would serve as food, while the money was to supply other necessities. It is doubtful, however, that such meaning can be assigned to the verb translated *I bought;* it is better to retain the common rendering. **Fifteen pieces** (or, *shekels*) **of silver**—A shekel of silver is equivalent to about sixty cents; the entire amount being about nine dollars. **Homer of barley**—According to Ezek. xlv, 11, the homer contains ten ephahs or baths (but compare Exod. xvi, 36); of the bath two calculations have been handed down: that of the rabbis, ascribing to it a capacity of 21.26 quarts, and that of Josephus, who makes it equivalent to 40.62 quarts. The homer would contain ten times that amount. **Half homer**—Heb. *lethekh.* A measure not otherwise known; Hebrew tradition makes it equivalent to a half homer. LXX. renders, "a bottle of wine," which is accepted by some moderns as original. Admitting the correctness of the Hebrew, Hosea would have paid one

homer of barley: 3 And I said unto her, Thou shalt [c]abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for *another* man: so *will* I also *be* for thee. 4 For the children of Israel shall abide many days [d]without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without [3]an image, and without an [e]ephod, and *without*

[c] Deut. 21. 13.——[d] Chap. 10. 3.——[3] Heb. *a standing*, or, *statue*, or, *pillar*, Isa. 19. 19.

[e] Exod. 28. 6.

homer and a half of barley in addition to the fifteen shekels of silver. The money value of the barley it is difficult to determine. 2 Kings vii, 18, helps but little, since the price stated there is not the normal price. If we assume that the ordinary rate was three seahs for one shekel, one homer and a half—forty-five seahs—would cost approximately fifteen shekels; that added to fifteen shekels paid cash would make thirty shekels—according to Exod. xxi, 32, the value of a slave. Why Hosea paid partly in barley and partly in cash we do not know.

3. Gomer cannot be immediately restored to her full privileges as wife. **Abide**—Remain inactive; in what sense the latter part of the verse states. **For me**—As my possession. **Many days**—Until the prophet shall feel assured that he may safely restore her to her full privileges. **Shalt not play the harlot**—Living in seclusion, she is to discontinue her shameful career. **Not be for another man** ["any man's wife"]—The preceding expression points to the cessation of illegitimate intercourse, but even the legitimate conjugal intercourse is not to be resumed for a while. **So will I also be for** ["toward"] **thee**—He will abstain from all intercourse and yet remain loyal to Gomer during the probationary period. That this is the meaning seems evident, though a slight alteration may have to be made to get it from the original.

For the prophet's purpose it is not necessary to describe further his domestic experience; he turns immediately, verse 4, to the application of the experience described in verse 3. As the reclaimed Gomer must pass through a probationary period, in which she is compelled to abstain even from legitimate pleasures before she is restored to complete favor, so Israel must pass through a long period of seclusion, when she will be deprived of all her religious and civil institutions, before she can enjoy the blessings of Jehovah pictured in ii, 15ff. **Children of Israel**—The northern kingdom, to which Hosea primarily addresses himself. **Abide**—Remain inactive so far as national activities are concerned. The things enumerated are those thought essential to the nation's life; their withdrawal will be a serious loss. **King**—The secular as well as the religious head of the nation. **Prince**—During the period of the monarchy the term designates all civil and military officers, not only members of the royal family. **Sacrifice**—In the popular conception bringing of sacrifices covered almost all religious requirements; the inability to bring them would appear a very serious loss *to the people*. For the prophet's estimate see vi, 6. This threat seems to imply the expectation of an exile; in a foreign and unclean land sacrifices might not be offered (ix, 4). **Image** ["pillar"]—See on Mic. v, 13. **Ephod**—This term seems to be used in the Old Testament with two distinct meanings. In Exod. xxviii, 6–14, is described the high priest's ephod or garment; in many passages this is the meaning of the word. There are other passages, however, where this meaning seems unsuitable; for example, Judg. viii, 24–27. The root meaning of the word is generally thought to be *to cover, to overlay*. From this it has been inferred that in some passages the ephod is an image of Jehovah overlaid with silver and gold (Judg. viii, 24–27; xvii, 5; 1 Sam. xxi, 10; xxiii, 6, etc.). This would give ac-

[f]teraphim: 5 Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and [g]seek the LORD their God, and [h]David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the [i]latter days.

[f] Judg. 17. 5.—[g] Jer. 50. 4, 5; chap. 5. 6. —[h] Jer. 30. 9; Ezek. 34. 23, 24; 37. 22, 24.

ceptable sense here. Whatever its exact form, it was undoubtedly something used in connection with the consulting of the oracle. (See article "Ephod" in Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible.*) The statement does not necessarily imply that Hosea regarded the ephod as valuable, or that he considered its removal a serious loss. He puts himself in the place of the people; they would consider the loss of all these things a serious calamity. **Teraphim**—Another uncertain word. That they were idols is clear from Gen. xxxi, 19, 30; xxxv, 2–4; Judg. xvii, 5, etc. Sometimes they must have been of considerable size (1 Sam. xix, 13–16). It is generally thought that they were household gods, and as such they have been compared with the Roman *lares* and *penates*. Whether they can be regarded as household deities exclusively must remain uncertain in view of Ezek. xxi, 21. That they were the images of ancestors and that they prove the prevalence of ancestor worship in Israel is more than can be naturally inferred from the Old Testament references. Dr. Foote, after careful investigation, concludes that the ephod is a pouch used in connection with the giving of oracles, while the teraphim are the lots used for determining the oracles.

5. The judgment will bring the people to their senses and prepare them for intimate fellowship with Jehovah. **Afterward**—After the judgment has exercised its salutary effect. **Return, and seek**—Not necessarily from exile. The construction is the same as that in ii, 9, where R. V. renders "take back"; here equivalent to **seek again**—Cured from apostasy, they will return from following the Baalim and seek Jehovah. Him, and him alone, will they recognize as their God. **David their king**—See Introduction, p. 34. **Shall fear** ["come with fear unto"] **Jehovah**—The same verb is translated "shall thrill," that is, with joyous emotion, in Isa. lx, 5 (compare Jer. xxxiii, 9; Hos. xi, 11); that seems to be the thought here: they will approach Jehovah trembling with joyful anticipation, though a sense of fear is not absent when they think of their former sinfulness. **His goodness**—As manifested in the restoration of the gifts withdrawn, in his readiness to forgive, and in the pouring out of countless blessings in which the Messianic age abounds (ii 21, 22; Amos ix, 11ff.; Jer. xxxi, 11–13, etc.). **In the latter days**—See on Mic. iv, 1.

[i] Isa. 2. 2; Jer. 30. 24; Ezek. 38. 8, 16; Dan. 2. 28; Mic. 4. 1.

CHAPTER IV.

Awful Condition of the People Due to a Lack of the Knowledge of Jehovah, for which Lack the Priests are Responsible, 1–19.

HEAR the word of the LORD, ye

With chapter iv opens the second main division of the Book of Hosea (iv–xiv). No definite plan of arrangement can be traced, though fresh beginnings may be recognized in iv, 1; v, 1; ix, 1; xi, 12 (xii, 1, in the Hebrew); xiii, 1; xiv, 1. The section as a whole may be taken to represent Hosea's teaching after the death of Jeroboam II. Throughout the first few chapters the emphasis is upon the people's guilt. This is the predominant note in chapter iv. In the first part (verses 1–10) the moral corruption in everyday life receives special condemnation, in 11–19 the moral corruption seen in the religious cult. Both sections close with announcements of judgment (9, 10, 19). At the same time the prophet accuses the priests as responsible for the

children of Israel: for the LORD hath a [a]controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because *there is* no truth, nor mercy, nor [b]knowledge of God in the land. 2 By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and [1]blood toucheth blood 3 Therefore [c]shall the land mourn, and [d]every one that dwelleth therein shall languish, with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven; yea, the fishes of the sea also shall be taken away. 4 Yet let no man strive, nor reprove another: for thy people

[a] Isa. 1. 18; 3. 13, 14; Jer. 25. 31; chap. 12. 2; Mic. 6. 2.—[b] Jer. 4. 22; 5. 4.

[1] Heb. *bloods.*—[c] Jer. 4. 28; 12. 4; Amos 5. 16; 8. 8.—[d] Zeph. 1. 3.

lamentable conditions (especially 4–8); they have failed to instruct the people in the law of Jehovah.

1–3. *The moral corruption in everyday life.* **Hear**—The prophet solemnly summons Israel to listen to the accusation he brings in the name of Jehovah. **Jehovah hath a controversy**—Jehovah is both plaintiff and judge (Isa. i, 2; compare Hos. xii, 2; Mic. vi, 2). He is proceeding against the people because their life and conduct are contrary to his will. All virtue and godliness have disappeared. **Truth**—Truthfulness and fidelity in their transactions. The lack of it is due to the want of **mercy** ["goodness"]—The same word is translated in ii, 19, "loving-kindness"; it is used here in the same sense as there (see on ii, 19). The lack of love in turn is due to the absence of the **knowledge of God**—See on ii, 20 (compare iv, 6; v, 4; vi, 3, etc.). Note that Hosea does not say *Jehovah;* truthfulness and kindness are universally recognized virtues, not confined to the worshipers of Jehovah. Verse 2 shows what is found in Israel in the place of virtue. **By swearing**—Better, with R. V., "There is naught but swearing." **Lying**—R. V., "Breaking faith" —The two expressions are closely connected; oaths are taken lightly and broken easily; the two combined are almost equivalent to *false swearing* or *perjury* (x, 4), the opposite of truthfulness (verse 1). Perjury, murder, theft, and adultery, all caused by the absence of loving-kindness (verse 1), are common; the ninth, sixth, eighth, and seventh commandments are thus broken. **They break out**—Into acts of violence. **Blood**—Bloody, violent deeds (*G.-K.*, 124n)—**toucheth blood**—One bloody deed follows closely upon another.

3. As a result the land is suffering a terrible calamity. **Shall . . . mourn** —The Hebrew tenses might be rendered as futures announcing calamity to come (so E. V.); it is more probable, however, that the prophet is thinking of a present calamity, future judgments being announced later in the chapter. The verbs should therefore be rendered, in perfect accord with the Hebrew grammar, *does mourn, does languish, are taken away.* The calamity seems to be a drought, from which men and beasts suffer. The last clause shows the extent of the drought. **The sea**—When the large bodies of water dry up the rivers and lakes do the same; then the fishes can live no more. **Taken away**—Perish (Isa. xvi, 10; lx, 20, etc.).

The religious leaders are chiefly responsible for the sins of the people, 4–8.

Verse 4, as it stands now, offers considerable difficulties to the interpreter, and has been variously explained. **Yet let no man strive . . . reprove**—In 1–3 the prophet has condemned the people, in 5ff. he accuses the priests; with these facts in mind we must seek for an interpretation of 4. The verse seems to mark the transition between the two sections. It is best interpreted as the utterance of the prophet, in a sense defending the people, who are to be pitied more than blamed. The words appear to be addressed partly to the speaker himself, the prophet, as if he desired to correct the harsh judg-

are as they [e]that strive with the priest. 5 Therefore shalt thou fall [f]in the day, and the prophet also shall fall with thee in the night, and I will [2]destroy thy mother.

[e] Deut. 17. 12.—[f] See Jer. 6. 4, 5; 15. 8.

[2] Heb. *cut off*.

ment uttered in 1, 2, partly to the people, who in the presence of the serious calamity described in 3 would accuse one another of being responsible for it. In the latter part of 4 he begins to point out where the real trouble lies. **Thy people are as they that strive with the Priest**—If this is the original reading the suggested interpretation of 4a cannot be correct, for here the people are again severely condemned. Following the present text, Henderson and others interpret the verse as meaning that the striving among the people is ordered by Jehovah to cease since "all reproof on the part of their friends and neighbors generally would prove fruitless, seeing they had reached a degree of hardihood which was equalled by the contumacy of those who refused to obey the priest when he gave judgments in the name of the Lord (Deut. xvii, 12)." A similar comparison is found in v, 10. Others interpret 4a as spoken by the people, who are out of patience with the prophet and desire his denunciations and rebukes to cease; for this they are condemned by the prophet in 4b. There are serious doubts, however, concerning the accuracy of the text of 4b. (1) In verse 6 the priests are addressed; 5 is most naturally interpreted as addressed to the same. If so, it is strange that in or preceding 5 the priests are not mentioned as being addressed directly. (2) In view of the fierce denunciation of the priesthood in verse 6, would it not seem strange in Hosea to demand of the people obedience to priestly instruction, and that he should consider disobedience the limit of transgression? The trouble was that the people followed the example and instruction of the priests too willingly. (3) Hosea opposed the priests more vehemently than anyone else in the nation. Is it natural to suppose that he should hold up his own prophetic attitude as the culmination of apostasy? To relieve the difficulty various emendations have been suggested, all based more or less upon the unvocalized text and upon LXX. The most acceptable of these seems that of Beck, followed by G. A. Smith and others: "For my people are as their priestlings. O priest ....." Verse 4 and the opening words of verse 5 would then read, "Let none find fault and none upbraid, for my people are but as their priestlings. O priest, thou shalt stumble. . . ." This emendation requires but slight alterations in the consonantal text.

From the people (4a), for whom the prophet has great sympathy, he turns to denounce the religious leaders (4b ff.). On *priestlings*, see on x, 5. Marti rejects 5, 6a as "foreign to the original context," but his reasons are not convincing. **Fall**—R. V., "stumble." Not with reference to sin, but punishment; equivalent to *perish* (xiv, 1). **In the day . . . night**—Both day and night; at all times. The night is mentioned with the prophet, since dreams and night visions (Num. xii, 6; Zech. i, 8) form a very important means of prophetic revelation; the priest's work is chiefly in the daytime. **Prophet**—Not spiritually minded prophets like Amos and Hosea, nor prophets of foreign deities, but mercenary prophets, who prophesied from low, selfish motives (Mic. iii, 11; compare Amos vii, 12; 1 Kings xxii, 6; Isa. xxviii, 7). Prophets and priests who have become misleaders shall fall together. **Thy mother**—In ii, 2, where the Israelites are addressed, the whole nation. In Psa. cxlix, 2, the inhabitants of Jerusalem are called children of Zion (compare 2 Sam. xx, 19). In these passages the mother is the nation or city, of which

6 [g]My people are [3]destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also

[g] Isa. 5. 13.—[3] Heb. *cut off.*

the inhabitants are the children. The priests who are here addressed are the constituent parts of the priestly order; the individual priests might be called its children; *thy mother* is therefore probably the priestly order or guild.

Verse 6 continues the condemnation of the priests. **My people are destroyed**—A *prophetic* perfect. The event is still future, but the prophet is so sure of its occurrence that he pictures it as already present. The people must suffer for their sins, though these are due largely to the neglectfulness of priest and prophet. **For lack of knowledge**—Of Jehovah; the secret of the people's sinfulness. For this lack the priests are responsible (see on ii, 20). **Thou**—The priest; the pronoun is emphatic in Hebrew. **Knowledge**—Has the article in Hebrew; a specific kind of knowledge, of Jehovah and his will, of which the priests were the custodians (Ezek. xliv, 23). **Rejected**—They have failed to be guided by it and to give proper instruction in it. Jehovah can use them no longer; they shall cease to be his priests. The latter part of verse 6 repeats the thought for the sake of emphasis. **Forgotten . . . forget**—Practically equivalent to *reject;* for as Jehovah's knowing has an ethical aspect (see on Amos iii, 2), so his *forgetting.* **Law of thy God**—Parallel with *knowledge* in the first part. The law supplies the knowledge. That written laws existed in Hosea's time is beyond doubt (viii, 12); but the term *law* (Heb. *tôrāh*) in prophetic literature is not limited to written law or to law in the narrow sense of that term; frequently it is synonymous with *word* (Isa. i, 10; ii, 3), where in margin R. V it is rendered "teaching," or "instruction." Like many theological terms, the word has a history, and in the course of that history it did not retain at all times the same meaning. In the postexilic period it became the technical term for the *Five Books of Moses,* or *Pentateuch.* From the occurrence of the word in various Old Testament books it has been assumed that this fact in itself proves conclusively the existence of the Pentateuch in complete written form at the time these books were written. If *law* and *Pentateuch* were always identical this would be valid reasoning, but there are many passages throughout the Old Testament in which the word does not refer to the Pentateuch. The noun comes probably—though this is questioned by some—from a verb *to throw,* that is, arrows; it is used also of the casting of lots. The casting of lots was one primitive way of determining the will of the deity (Ezek. xxi, 21). From this usage of the verb the noun received its primary significance: every kind of instruction received from the deity by the casting of the lot. When a higher stage of communion with God was attained the noun came to denote every revelation received from God by prophet or priest, whatever the means of communication. When these expressions of the divine will were collected and put in writing, at first probably in small collections, the separate items and the entire collection were called *Tôrāh*—Law. At this stage the term came to be restricted to legal requirements. Only in a more advanced stage, when it was seen that practically all Hebrew law was contained in the Pentateuch, the term was employed to designate that group of books. (Compare *Journal of Biblical Literature,* xxiv, part i, pp. 1–16.) The significance of the word in any given passage must be determined very largely from the context. Here it is used of written law as well as of instruction otherwise

forget thy children. 7 [h]As they were increased, so they sinned against me: [i]*therefore* will I change their glory into shame. 8 They eat up the sin of my people, and they [4]set their heart on their iniquity. 9 And there shall be, [k]like people, like priest: and I will [5]punish them for their ways, and [6]reward them their doings. 10 For [l]they shall eat, and not have enough: they shall commit whoredom, and

[h] Chap. 13. 6.—[i] 1 Sam. 2. 30; Mal. 2. 9; Phil. 3. 19.—[4] Heb. *lift up their soul to their iniquity.*—[k] Isa. 24. 2; Jer. 5. 31.

[5] Heb. *visit upon.*—[6] Heb. *cause to return.*—[l] Lev. 26. 26; Mic. 6. 14; Hag. 1. 6.

received and given. **Thy children**—The individual members of the priestly guild (verse 5).

7. **They**—The priests. **Were increased** ["multiplied"]—Not only in numbers, but also in wealth and prosperity, sharing in the glories of the successful reign of Jeroboam II. **They sinned against me**—Prosperity led to moral and religious corruption among the people; the priests instead of stemming the tide of worldliness were carried away by it, and rather encouraged it (verse 8; compare Mic. iii, 11). **Change their glory into shame**—From their honorable position as representatives of Jehovah they will be cast into shame and degradation. In verses 5 and 6 the description of sin is followed by announcement of judgment; this is also the order in verse 7 and gives acceptable sense; emendations therefore seem unnecessary. It should be noted, however, that Targum and Peshitto appear to have read "they have changed" instead of "I will change." That would be an additional description of the priests' corruption; they have exchanged the glory which was theirs as priests of the true God for the degrading position of priests of the Baalim—not in name, perhaps, but in deed. Ancient Jewish tradition recognizes this as a more accurate text but goes further, declaring that "their glory" was originally "my glory"; that is, they have exchanged the glory of Jehovah for the shameful service of the Baalim. All three readings give satisfactory sense; and in view of the conflicting testimony it may be impossible to say with certainty which is the original.

Verse 8 continues the condemnation of the priests. Their holy office they use for selfish and mean ends. **They eat up the sin of my people**—Better, with R. V., "They feed on the sin of my people." It is not necessary to translate *sin offering* for "sin"; and the question whether *sin offering*, in the technical sense of the term, was known in the days of Hosea cannot be determined from this passage; it is quite possible that it did exist. In a general sense all offerings may be called sin offerings. The thought is that "the more the people sin the more merrily thrive the priests"; for they receive a share of nearly all the offerings (1 Sam. ii, 13–17). **They** (the priests) **set their heart**—Literally *every one his heart.* The expression means *to cherish a longing for*, and thus *to encourage* (Deut. xxiv, 15; Psa. xxiv, 4). **Their**—The people's.

9, 10. *The judgment to fall upon priest and people alike.* **And there** ["it"] **shall be, like people, like priest**—Priest and people shall perish alike. The fact that the former enjoys in his official capacity special nearness to Jehovah will not save him. This interpretation, which brings out the meaning of the Hebrew most naturally, is preferable to that which sees in these words a summing up of the preceding accusations and makes the next clause the beginning of the threat. Having made the general announcement of judgment, the prophet proceeds to describe in detail its character. **Them**—Hebrew, singular, the priest, that is, the priestly class; so throughout this section. The corrupt priests will be dealt with according to their deserts. The retribution is according to the *lex talionis;* the

shall not increase: because they have left off to take heed to the LORD. 11 Whoredom and wine and new wine [m]take away the heart.

12 My people ask counsel at their [n]stocks, and their staff declareth unto them: for [o]the spirit of whoredoms hath caused *them* to err, and they have gone a whoring from under their God. 13 [p]They sacrifice

[m] Isa. 28. 7; see Eccl. 7. 7.——[n] Jer. 2. 27; Hab. 2. 19.

[o] Isa. 44. 20; chap. 5. 4.——[p] Isa. 1. 29; 57. 5, 7; Ezek. 6. 13; 20. 28.

unholy greed will be punished with insufficiency of food (Lev. xxvi, 16; Mic. vi, 14). **They shall . . . not have enough**—Referring back to verse 8. **Commit whoredom**—To be understood not as in chapters i–iii in a symbolic sense, but as in verses 11, 13, 14, literally. This interpretation is supported by the character of the judgment threatened. **They . . . shall not increase**—They will be cursed with childlessness. Jehovah will withdraw his blessings because they, probably both priest and people, **have left off to take** ["taking"] **heed**—Had no regard for Jehovah or for his will

11–14. *The religious corruption.* In verses 1, 2 the prophet emphasizes moral corruption here religious impurities, though the latter are not and cannot be separated entirely from the former. The section begins with what may be a proverb expressing the thought that sin blinds the spiritual faculties (Isa. v, 12; compare Joel i, 5). 11. **Whoredom**—The juxtaposition of the word with *wine* shows that it is to be interpreted literally. **Wine . . . new wine**—The former is a general term; on the latter see on Joel i, 5, 10. **Heart** ["understanding"]—See on Joel ii, 12. The weakening of the understanding manifests itself in the conduct described in the following verses. 12. **Stocks**—Literally, *wood,* or *tree.* May refer (1), as in Hab. ii, 19; Jer. ii, 27; x, 8, to idolatrous images; or (2) to images thought to represent Jehovah, such as the *calves* at Beth-el and Dan (viii, 4, 5); or (3) to tree cult, which survived for some time in Israel (verse 13; compare Isa. i, 29–31) and which is not unknown to-day (S. I. Curtis, *Primitive Semitic Religions To-day,* pp. 90ff.); or (4) to rabdomancy (see next clause), practiced among the Semites, the Scythians, the Germans, and other ancient nations. (3) is the most probable. **Ask counsel**—Consult through the oracle the divine will concerning proposed undertakings. The oracle of Jehovah alone was legitimate, and was frequently consulted (2 Sam. ii, 1; Judg. i, 1); but the contemporaries of Hosea were using illegitimate means. **Their staff declareth unto them**—Upon staves they depend for divine direction. Marti sees here also a reference to tree cult; the *staff* he takes to mean a small sacred tree or the branch of a tree. Most commentators think that the prophet has in mind rabdomancy. Cyril of Alexandria calls this practice an invention of the Chaldeans; he describes the method of procedure as follows: Two staves were held upright, and while incantations were murmured over them they were allowed to fall; the oracle was determined from the direction in which the staves fell, whether forward or backward, to the right or to the left (Ezek. xxi, 21). These practices are inspired by the spirit of **whoredoms**—The impulse to practice whoredom which had taken possession of the people (Zech. xiii, 2). 12b reads literally, *They have played the harlot from under their God;* they played the harlot, and thus freed themselves from the control of Jehovah. The expression is not quite the same as that in i, 2. In this verse also, as in 11, 13, 14, the expression might, perhaps, be understood in a literal sense, the immoralities and the spiritual apostasy were closely connected, but many commentators interpret verse 12 as referring to spiritual whoredom.

Verse 13 describes in greater detail the religious corruption. **Tops of the**

upon the tops of the mountains, and burn incense upon the hills, under oaks and poplars and elms, because the shadow thereof *is* good: [q]therefore your daughters shall commit whoredom, and your spouses shall commit adultery. 14 [7]I will not punish your daughters when they

[q] Amos 7. 17; Rom. 1. 28.

[7] Or, *Shall I not*, etc.

mountains . . . hills—Natural or artificial elevations were favorite spots for the erection of altars and sanctuaries; hence the designation *high place* for the local sanctuaries (Amos vii, 9; 1 Sam. ix, 12, etc. See article "High Place" in Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible*). **Burn incense**—See on ii, 13. **Oaks . . . poplars . . . elms** ["terebinths"]—Probably a survival of tree worship, though the next clause would seem to indicate that the places under these trees were selected on account of the shade (see on verse 12 and reference there). The trees mentioned are the most stately in Palestine, and would therefore receive special attention. The *oaks* flourished especially east of the Jordan, where they are still found. Tristram describes one thirty-seven feet in circumference with foliage having a circumference of ninety-one yards. The *terebinth* is frequently mentioned as a sacred tree. It grows in Palestine to a height of fifteen to twenty feet. Now the tree is comparatively rare west of the Jordan; there are still fine specimens in the territory of Moab. The *poplar*, literally, *white tree*, is mentioned only twice in the Old Testament, here and in Gen. xxx, 37. Some commentators identify it with the *storax* tree, chiefly because of the similarity between the Hebrew and the Arabic names. An objection to the view that this is the tree in the mind of Hosea is the fact that the storax is "nothing more than a very bushy shrub, rarely more than twelve feet in height, and neither from its size nor from its form would it be selected as a tree under the shadow of which sacrifices or incense might be offered." More likely the prophet has in mind the *white poplar*, which Tristram says he saw in various parts of Galilee, of the Lebanon, and of Mount Hermon. **The shadow thereof is good**—The shade made these spots desirable; if the prophet thinks of tree cult, the thought may be implied that from these trees went out special virtue and power. **Therefore**—Because of the conditions described in 11–13a; it introduces the reference to punishment in 14; 13b is a subordinate clause; 13b and 14a might be translated, "Therefore, though your daughters play the harlot . . . commit adultery, I will not punish your daughters. . . ." This removes the difficulty felt by some commentators concerning the loose connection between 13a and 13b. The pronominal suffixes of the second person in 13b and 14a are peculiar, since the persons addressed there are in 14b referred to in the third person. Marti proposes to change all the suffixes into the third person. To do this, or to change the third into the second, would result in a smoother reading. **Commit whoredom** ["play the harlot"]—The context makes it clear that the immoralities are those connected with the religious cult; they had crept from the Canaanitish religion into that of Israel. Originally there was probably behind the giving up of chastity in honor of the deity the desire to offer the most precious possession, but this motive was soon forgotten. In the worship of Jehovah these practices were out of place; and had the people known him they would have understood that they were an abomination to him. **Spouses**—R. V., "brides"; margin, "daughters-in-law"; designation of a *young* wife; here in general, *wives*.

14. Their shameful acts cannot be justified, but Jehovah knows that the chief fault is not with them; therefore the heaviest punishment will not fall upon the daughters and wives, but

commit whoredom, nor your spouses when they commit adultery: for themselves are separated with whores, and they sacrifice with harlots: therefore the people *that* [r]doth not understand shall [s]fall.

[r] Verses 1, 6.—[s] Or, *be punished.*—[s] Chap. 9. 15; 12. 11; Amos 4. 4; 5. 5.

upon those leading them astray by their wicked example. **Themselves** ["they"] —The fathers and husbands. **Harlots** ["prostitutes"]—Literally, *the consecrated ones* (Deut. xxiii, 17, 18); that is, women who are consecrated or consecrate themselves to a life of shame in honor of the deity. (See article "Harlot" in Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible.*) On the solemn occasion of sacrifice licentiousness is permitted to have full sway. The rest of the verse is, according to the English translations, an announcement of judgment; because of their corrupt condition the unthinking people shall be overthrown. It is preferable, however, to regard the words as expressing the result of the wickedness of the fathers and husbands, who would be looked upon as leaders; "And so the people that does not consider goes to its ruin." **That doth not understand**—Those who do not think for themselves. Daughters are apt to imitate the fathers, wives the husbands. **Shall fall**—Or, *go to ruin.* Not through a judgment to come; their present immoralities are their ruin.

Verse 16 continues the description of the corrupt condition. Between 14 and 16 stands a verse containing an appeal to Judah to take warning and abstain from Israel's transgressions. The originality of this verse is questioned by many on the same grounds as those mentioned in connection with i, 7. Others question the originality of 15a, referring 15b to Israel (compare Amos iv, 4; v, 5); but if any is denied to Hosea it should probably be the whole verse. As the verse stands at present the thought is that, if Israel is determined to continue in its apostasy, Judah ought to refuse to participate in its corrupt practices.

15 Though thou, Israel, play the harlot, *yet* let not Judah offend; [s]and come not ye unto Gilgal, neither go ye up to [t]Beth-aven, [u]nor swear, The LORD liveth. **16** For Israel [x]slideth back as a backsliding

[t] 1 Kings 12. 29; chap. 10. 5.—[u] Amos 8. 14; Zeph. 1. 5.—[x] Jer. 3. 6; 7. 24; 8. 5; Zech. 7. 11.

Play the harlot—If original, the context favors a literal interpretation; if secondary, it is quite likely that spiritual harlotry is meant. **Offend**—Better, with R. V. margin, "become guilty," by participating in the whoredom. Whether spiritual or physical, this was committed at the sanctuaries (13, 14); therefore Judah is admonished to remain away from them. **Gilgal**—See on Amos iv, 4. **Beth-aven** —The name of a place southeast of Beth-el (Josh. vii, 2; 1 Sam. xiii, 5); but Amos iv, 4; v, 5, make it more than probable that the prophet is thinking of Beth-el, the chief sanctuary of the northern kingdom. Its name means *house of God;* it is such no longer; therefore the prophet substitutes the other name meaning, *house of vanity,* or *wickedness.* On Beth-el see Amos iii, 14. **Nor swear,** ["As"] **Jehovah liveth**—The common formula of an oath (Deut. vi, 13; x, 20; 1 Sam. xiv, 39, etc.). To swear by the name of Jehovah is ordered in Deuteronomy; it is hardly likely, therefore, that the words of Hosea are to be understood as an attempt to abolish the formula entirely. What the prophet does deprecate are the oaths sworn by Jehovah in connection with the corrupt practices at Beth-el and Gilgal (Amos viii, 14). What under normal conditions would be perfectly proper, under present conditions has become an abomination. Chiefly in view of Amos v, 5; viii, 14, several commentators suggest that Beer-sheba, the third sanctuary mentioned by Amos, was either read here originally or, at least, implied: "Nor swear at Beer-sheba, As Jehovah liveth."

Verse 16 does not connect with 15, but with 14, unless 15a is omitted and

heifer: now the LORD will feed them as a lamb in a large place. 17 Ephraim *is* joined to idols: [y]let him alone. 18 Their drink [9]is sour: they have committed whoredom continually: [z]her [10]rulers *with* shame do

[y] Matt. 15. 14.—[9] Heb. *is gone.*

[z] Mic. 3. 11; 7. 3.—[10] Heb. *shields*, Psa. 47. 9.

15b is understood as addressed to Israel; at any rate, 16 continues the description of Israel's depravity. **For**—Better, *verily, surely* (G.-K., 148d). **Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer**—R. V., "Israel hath behaved himself stubbornly, like a stubborn heifer"; or simply, *Israel is stubborn, like a stubborn heifer.* Israel absolutely refuses to submit to the divine purpose (Deut. xxxii, 15). **Now Jehovah will feed them as a lamb in a large place**—Understood commonly as a threat. "As Israel would not submit to the yoke of the divine law, it should have what it desired. God would feed it like a lamb which, being in a wide field, becomes a prey of the wolves and wild beasts" (Keil). Similarly Delitzsch, "Jehovah will find means to make the obstinate heifer which will not wear the yoke quiet as a lamb; and the heifer which will not plow the fields of its own country shall roam like a tame lamb the wide plains of strangers." A serious objection to this rendering is that *large place* everywhere else is a symbol of prosperity (Isa. xxx, 23; Psa. xviii, 19; xxxi, 8, etc.). The difficulty disappears if the clause is translated as a rhetorical question or exclamation: "(This being so) shall now Jehovah feed them as a lamb in a large place?" Answer, Certainly not. Or, as Cheyne renders with some freedom, "Israel is a stubborn heifer; how then should it expect to be treated kindly as a lamb?"

What its treatment shall be is stated in verse 17. Marti omits the words entirely; verse 17 he abbreviates; in 18a he alters the text so that 16, 17, 18a read, "For Israel hath behaved himself stubbornly, like a stubborn heifer; Ephraim is joined to idols, a company of drunkards." These changes are unwarranted. **Ephraim**—Israel. Ephraim was the most prominent tribe of the north (xiii, 1). **Joined to idols**—Is so bound up with its idols that it cannot give them up (Isa. xliv, 11). Nominally Israel retained Jehovah worship, but it appropriated so many heathen elements that to Hosea it appeared to be idolatry. **Let him alone**—The speaker is Jehovah (compare verses 12, 14); the one addressed can only be the prophet, not Judah; he is to leave Israel to its fate, since nothing can be done with or for it (2 Sam. xvi, 11; 2 Kings xxiii, 18). LXX. offers a text which may be rendered either "which (the idols) he (Ephraim) made for himself stumbling-blocks," or simply, "he made for himself stumbling-blocks." Whether this represents the original it is difficult to say; the present Hebrew text gives good sense.

Verse 18 is obscure; here, as elsewhere in 15–19, the correctness of the Hebrew text is open to question. The uncertainty is increased by the conflicting testimony of the ancient versions. Assuming that the Hebrew text is correct, the following appears to be the most probable interpretation: **Their drink is sour**—Certainly an incorrect translation. *Drink* appears to be used in the sense of *drinking, carousing* (1 Sam. i, 14; xxv, 37). The verb means *is finished, is passed* (1 Sam. xv, 32); therefore R. V. margin is nearer the truth, "Their carouse is over." The first two clauses of verse 18 are thrown together without conjunction, due to the deep emotion of the prophet. The connection must be supplied and may be indicated thus: "When their carousing is over they play the harlot"; that is, when they grow weary of one form of sin they immediately plunge into another. **They have committed whoredom continually**—The verb form describes a common practice, and would better be reproduced in the English by the

love, Give ye. **19** [a]The wind hath bound her up in her wings, and [b]they shall be ashamed because of their sacrifices.

[a] Jer. 4. 11, 12; 51. 1.—[b] Isa. 1. 29; Jer. 2. 26.

present tense; so R. V., "they play the harlot continually." But this does not reproduce fully the force of the original. The emphasis is not upon the continuation, but upon the eagerness with which the immoralities are practiced; a better rendering would be, "they indulge in whoredom." **Her rulers with shame do love, Give ye**—R. V., "her rulers dearly love shame"; margin, "they are given up to love (impure love); her rulers are a shame," while possible, is not so good. In the Hebrew three letters seem to be accidentally repeated; if they are omitted the text reads, "her rulers love shame"; a slight emendation would give the more emphatic reading of R. V. **Rulers**—Literally, *shields* (Psa. xlvii, 9); the office of the rulers was to guard and shield the people. This they neglected to do; all they cared for were the shameful practices.

The section closes with an announcement of judgment, in verse 19. **The wind hath bound** ["wrapped"] **her up in her** ["its"] **wings**—The tense is the so-called *prophetic* perfect; the event is still future but imminent, and the prophet is sure of its occurrence. The figure expresses the suddenness and violence with which Israel will be swept away (Isa. lix, 19). **They shall be ashamed** ["put to shame"] **because of their sacrifices**—*Sacrifices*, with an unusual plural ending in Hebrew, would stand for the religious cult in general; its corruption (11ff.) is the cause of the nation's overthrow. Neither the margin, "their altars shall be put to shame" nor LXX., "they shall be put to shame because of their altars," is as good. Verses 18, 19 contain several linguistic peculiarities; the freedom in the use of the pronouns is unusual, and it is quite possible that the text of 11–19 has not been handed down in its original purity.

CHAPTER V.

HEAR ye this, O priests; and hearken, ye house of Israel; and give ye ear, O house of the king;

CHAPTER V.

THE UTTER CORRUPTION OF ISRAEL —THE IMMINENT DOOM, chap. v—viii.

Chapters v–viii, which are closely connected, present a detailed account of the manner in which corruption penetrated the entire public life and affected the state from the highest to the lowest. Interspersed are exhortations, warnings, threats of inevitable destruction.

REBUKE OF ISRAEL'S APOSTASY— TIME OF MERCY IS PAST, v, 1–15.

Chapter v falls naturally into two parts: 1–7, where the emphasis is upon guilt; 8–15, which deals primarily with judgment. The address is directed against (1) the priests, (2) the people, (3) the king and his courtiers. Which of these receives primary attention it is not always easy to say. The civil and religious leaders are largely to blame, but all must suffer the consequences.

Rebuke of Israel's apostasy, 1–7.

Verse 1 opens with a summons. **Priests**—Already condemned in chapter iv. **House of Israel**—The people. **House of the king**—The king and his courtiers. **Toward** ["unto"]—Not all three classes, but only the leaders, as 1b indicates. **Judgment**—Not judicial powers, but the sentence of judgment about to be uttered. So margin, "against you is the judgment." **Because**—The reason for the judgment. They have caused the people to stumble. The latter are compared to unsuspecting birds, which fly to the places where they may expect to find shelter; instead they are cruelly trapped. **Mizpah**—Probably Mizpah in Gilead (Judg. x, 17; xi, 11), the same as Ramoth-gilead (Josh. xx, 8; 2 Kings ix, 1,

for judgment *is* toward you, because [a]ye have been a snare on Mizpah, and a net spread upon Tabor. **2** And the revolters are [b]profound to make slaughter, [1]though I *have been* [2]a rebuker of them all. **3.** [c]I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hid from me: for now, O Ephraim, [d]thou committest whoredom, *and* Israel is defiled. **4** [3 4]They will not frame their doings to turn unto their God: for [e]the spirit of whoredoms *is* in the midst of them, and they have not known the LORD. **5** And the pride of Israel doth testify to his face: therefore shall Israel and Eph-

[a] Chap. 6. 9.——[b] Isa. 29. 15.——[1] Or, *and*, etc.——[2] Heb. *a correction*.——[c] Amos 3. 2.——[d] Ezek. 23. 5, etc.; chap. 4. 17.

[3] Heb. *They will not give*.——[4] Or, *Their doings will not suffer them*.——[e] Chap. 4. 12.——[f] Chap. 7. 10.

etc.) now *es-Salt*. **Tabor**—The well-known mountain of that name, east of Nazareth, in Galilee. Some have thought that these localities represent the territory east and west of the Jordan respectively, the combination of the two indicating that the wrong-doing of the leaders covered the whole land. It is more likely, however, that the two places are mentioned because there the immoral practices connected with the cult were most dangerously seductive. **2. And the revolters are profound to make slaughter**—R. V., "And the revolters are gone deep in making slaughter." For the last three words margin suggests "in corruption," which is to be preferred, since the context says nothing about murder, nor is there a reference to the slaughter of sacrifice. The thought would be that the apostate leaders have gone to all possible depths of corruption. The ancient versions found the passage obscure. Modern commentators are generally agreed on an emendation, very slight in the original, "And the pit of Shittim they have made deep." At Shittim the Israelites gave themselves to the abominations of Baal-peor (Num. xxv, 1ff.). It is thought that Shittim, like Mizpah and Tabor, was a sacred place where the people were led astray. If this emendation is adopted *pit* is parallel with *snare* and *net*, and the clause contains an additional accusation against the nobles for causing the unsuspecting people to stumble. **Though I have been a rebuker of them all**—Better R. V., "but I am a rebuker"; Heb. *rebuke*. Tempter and tempted alike will be visited by Jehovah in judgment. Cheyne, by transposing two letters, makes the clause a continuation of the description of the people's sin: "and there is no correction for any of them," that is, improvement has become impossible (verse 4).

Verses 3, 4 indicate the cause of Jehovah's anger. Their conduct is well known to him. **I**—Emphatic in Hebrew. **Ephraim**—Poetic synonym of Israel. What Jehovah knows is stated in 3b. **Now**—The force of this word is uncertain. Keil thinks it is used to designate the whoredom of Israel as in fact lying before him. It is not impossible, however, that two similar sounding words have been interchanged, *now* for *thou*, Heb. *'attāh* for *'attāh*, and we should read, "for thou, O Ephraim." **They will not frame their doings**—R. V., "Their doings will not suffer them," is certainly to be preferred. Wrongdoing has become their second nature; they find it impossible to return to Jehovah (vii, 2; Jer. xiii, 23). **Spirit of whoredoms**—See on iv, 12. **In the midst of them**—In their innermost being. **Have not known**—R. V., "they know not" (see on ii, 20; compare iv, 6).

Verse 5 announces judgment. **Pride of Israel doth testify**—Repeated in vii, 10; is capable of two interpretations: (1) If *pride* is used in an evil sense of the haughty and arrogant attitude of the Israelites, the meaning is expressed most satisfactorily by Marti: "The strongest testimony against the Israelites, and the most convincing proof of their incapacity for improvement is offered by their arrogance, in which they regard their conduct, their cult and service of Jehovah, as acceptable to him, and therefore do

raim fall in their iniquity; Judah also shall fall with them. 6 [g]They shall go with their flocks and with their herds to seek the LORD; but they shall not find *him*; he hath withdrawn himself from them. 7 They have [h]dealt treacherously against the LORD: for they have be-

[g] Prov. 1. 28; Isa. 1. 15; Jer. 11. 11; Ezek. 8. 18; Mic. 3. 4; John 7. 34.

[h] Isa. 48. 8; Jer. 3. 20; 5. 11; chap. 6. 7; Mal. 2. 11.

not think in the least of a return." (2) The other interpretation is suggested by the marginal rendering for *pride*, "excellency"; this many commentators understand to be a title of Jehovah; he is the "excellency of Jacob" (Amos viii, 7; compare 1 Sam. xv, 19). According to this interpretation *testify* is used not in the simple sense of *bear witness*, Jehovah is both witness and judge; here the emphasis would be upon the pronouncing of the sentence, the sentence being contained in the next clause. The rendering "the pride of Israel shall be humbled," though supported by some of the ancient versions, is unsuitable with "to his face." On the whole, the first interpretation is to be preferred. Nothing but judgment is possible. **Fall**—Better, R. V., "shall stumble." A common figure of calamity (iv, 5; xiv, 1; Isa. viii, 15, etc.). **In their iniquity**—Better, *by*, or *through*. Iniquity is the cause. **Judah also shall fall** ["stumble"]—In i, 7, and iv, 15, Judah is represented as being better than Israel; here, as in verses 10, 12, 13, 14, etc., it is considered equally guilty. The difference has sometimes been explained as due to the fact that the utterance in this verse and others like it are of a later period than those in i, 7, and iv, 15, when Hosea had become more familiar with conditions in Judah. So far as i, 7, is concerned, this is undoubtedly true; of iv, 15, this cannot be said with equal certainty. Conditions began to grow bad in Judah as early as in Israel. Whether Hosea ever considered Judah better than Israel is at least doubtful (see on i, 7). All references to Judah are considered secondary by some commentators, but in some cases, at least, on insufficient grounds. In certain passages, it is true, they might easily be omitted without affecting the thought, sometimes the parallelism and even the thought would be improved if the reference were omitted, or changed to *Israel* (for example, in this verse); in other instances, however, the omission would seriously affect the text and require alterations which cannot readily be justified (verses 12, 13, 14). In the absence of decisive data the passages are treated as original unless statements to the contrary are made.

6. It is impossible to appease the divine wrath and to avert the threatened judgment by the means with which Israel is accustomed to seek the favor of Jehovah. **Go . . . seek Jehovah**—Chapter vi, 1–3, indicates that they sought Jehovah only to find relief from calamity; repentance was lacking completely (see on Amos v, 4). **Flocks . . . herds**—Multitudes of sacrificial animals. These are of value only when offered in the right spirit and backed by a life acceptable to Jehovah (Introduction, p. 32; compare Amos v, 21ff.; Isa. i, 11ff.). **He hath withdrawn himself**—He has cut the ties which bound him to the people; he can no longer be reached by them (verse 15; compare Isa. viii, 17). Why? Verse 7 supplies the answer. **Dealt treacherously**—Better, *They have been faithless*. The verb is used of the infidelity of a wife to her husband (Jer. iii, 20). The next figure expresses a similar thought. **They have begotten** ["borne"] **strange children**—Children not the offspring of a legitimate union. "Israel ought to have begotten children of God in the maintenance of the covenant with the Lord; but in its apostasy from God it had begotten an adulterous generation"—a generation which from its infancy was led astray by the example of the parents. The second clause marks an advance. Not only have they themselves become faithless;

gotten strange children: now shall [i]a month devour them with their portions. 8 [k]Blow ye the cornet in Gibeah, *and* the trumpet in Ramah:

[i] Zech. 11. 8.

[k] Chap. 8. 1; Joel 2. 1.

in addition they have brought into the world a generation which is estranged from Jehovah. **Now shall a month devour them with their portions**—R. V., "now shall the new moon devour them with their fields." Marti alters the text so as to read, "Now shall a destroyer devour them; and wasted shall become their fields." Less radical emendations have been proposed, but, since all are based upon conjecture, if we accept any we may as well accept the one giving the best sense. But what does the present Hebrew text mean? Are emendations absolutely necessary? If we follow A. V. in reading *month* the meaning might be either that within a month's time the destroyer will be upon them (Clarke), or that a brief month will be sufficient to completely destroy them and their possessions. A still different meaning is suggested by G. A. Smith; he translates, "Now may a month devour them with their portions," which he interprets, "Any month may bring the swift invader." These interpretations would make the transition from 7 to 8 quite natural. The destroyer will soon be here; therefore (8) give the signal, prepare for battle. The Revisers, however, preferred the translation "new moon," one of the most ancient festivals among the Hebrews, on which it was customary to offer sacrifice (ii, 11; 1 Sam. xx, 6, 29; Isa. i, 13). Even with this translation Cheyne finds in the passage a thought similar to that expressed by G. A. Smith: "Instead of watching gladly for the new moon . . . they should have a 'fearful looking for of judgment,' increasing as each new moon arose. If not this, then perhaps the next would bring a slaughtering, plundering horde of invaders." A vivid imagination is needed to see this meaning in the words. A more natural interpretation would be to regard *new moon* as synonymous with festival or, better, as representing the entire superficial sacrificial system and worship. "Your hypocritical worship, so far from bringing you salvation, will rather prove your ruin" (Keil). If the *portions* or *fields* of the individuals are destroyed it will amount to the devastation of the whole land. The differences among commentators show the obscurity of the passage. The interpretation of G. A. Smith, on the one hand, and that of Keil, on the other, reproduce most faithfully the present Hebrew text; of these that of G. A. Smith connects more naturally with verse 8.

The time of mercy is past, 8–15.

The hopelessness of the situation is manifest: Jehovah can show mercy no longer, judgment is inevitable; it is about to break upon the sinful nations. The prophet summons them to prepare for it, and declares that Assyria and Egypt can offer no effective help; there can be no salvation until the people with heartfelt repentance return to Jehovah.

8. The danger signal is to be given. **Cornet** (or, *horn*) . . . **trumpet**—The two words are synonymous here; ordinarily they designate two different instruments. The former is the *curved* horn of a cow or ram which seems to have been used in early Israel chiefly, if not exclusively, for secular purposes: to give signals in war, to warn of approaching danger, to announce important public events, etc. When its sound was heard everyone was expected to drop work and take his place in the ranks. In later times it appears to have been used also for sacred purposes. The *trumpet* is long and straight, made of metal; it is rarely mentioned as being used for secular purposes, and seems to have been primarily a sacred instrument; it is pictured on Jewish coins, and represen-

[l]cry aloud *at* [m]Beth-aven, [n]after thee, O Benjamin. 9 Ephraim shall be desolate in the day of rebuke: among the tribes of Israel have I made known that which shall surely be. 10 The princes of Judah were like them that [o]remove the bound: *therefore* I will pour out my wrath upon them like water. 11 Ephraim *is* [p]oppressed *and* broken in judg-

[l] Isa. 10. 30.——[m] Josh. 7. 2; chap. 4. 15.

[n] Judg. 5. 14.——[o] Deut. 19. 14; 27. 17. ——[p] Deut. 28. 33.

tations of it were placed on the Arch of Titus. (Compare article "Trumpet" in Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible*, and the richly illustrated article "Music" in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*.) **Gibeah . . . Ramah . . . Beth-aven**—On the last see iv, 15. As a religious center, to which people crowded in great numbers, Beth-el would be a most appropriate place in which to sound the warning. The two other places, as their names indicate—Gibeah, *hill;* Ramah, *height*—were situated on elevations, and for this reason were well adapted for giving signals. The former is Gibeah of Benjamin or of Saul (1 Sam. xiii, 2; xi, 4), now *Tel-el-Fûl;* the latter, a little to the north, was the home of Samuel (1 Sam. xv, 34), now *er-Râm*. His summons to sound the alarm would seem to indicate that the prophet expected a foreign invasion, but the literal interpretation must not be pressed. **After thee, O Benjamin**—As in Judg. v, 14, where LXX. reads a different text, G. A. Smith suggests that this may have been an ancient battle cry of Benjamin, and he renders 8b, "Raise the slogan, Beth-aven: 'After thee, Benjamin!'" R. V., by rendering "behind thee," seems to imply another conception, that of a call of warning to Benjamin: "The enemy is already behind thee." LXX. reads, "Let Benjamin tremble," which gives excellent sense and is probably original. 9. The alarm may indeed be given, for Ephraim is doomed. **Day of rebuke**—Of judgment. **Tribes of Israel**—The northern tribes only. **Among**—Perhaps better, *concerning*, or *with regard to*. **That which shall surely be**—Literally, *that which is true*. There is no escape.

Verse 10 is preferably connected with verse 11, the former describing conditions in Judah, the latter those in Israel. In verse 10 the prophet turns to the third class named in verse 1, the "house of the king," here called *princes*. **Judah**—Following the theory that Hosea nowhere refers to the southern kingdom, some commentators read *Israel* instead. **Like them that remove the bound** ["landmark"]—The landmarks were under divine protection (Deut. xix, 14); a curse is pronounced upon him who removes them (Deut. xxvii, 17, frequently in the Assyrian and Babylonian inscriptions). This crime the prophet regards as the limit of transgression, from which the political leaders of Judah do not shrink (Isa. v, 8ff.; Mic. ii, 2). Such conduct cannot remain unpunished. Jehovah's wrath will be poured out **like water**—In abundance and power like a rushing torrent. Ephraim is equally guilty. **Oppressed . . . broken** ["crushed"]—The two expressions—passive participles—occur together in Deut. xxviii, 33. LXX. reads the active participles. Ephraim is the one that oppresses and crushes in judgment; and many commentators follow the LXX.; but to change the forms is arbitrary, and passive participles are not used in Hebrew in an active sense, a usage found frequently in Arabic. The common rendering is perfectly suitable.

In verse 10 the sin of Judah is condemned and judgment is announced; in verse 11 the order is reversed, first the announcement of judgment, then a statement of the cause. The participles stand in place of the prophetic perfect. **In judgment**—Or, *by judgment*, the one to be sent by Jehovah. Why? **Because he willingly**

ment, because he willingly walked after [q]the commandment. **12** Therefore *will* I *be* unto Ephraim as a moth, and to the house of Judah [r]as [5]rottenness. **13** When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah *saw* his [s]wound, then went Ephraim [t]to the Assyrian, [u]and sent [6]to king Jareb:

[q] 1 Kings 12. 28; Mic. 6. 16.—[r] Prov. 12. 4.—[5] Or, *a worm.*—[s] Jer. 30. 12.

[t] 2 Kings 15. 19; chap. 7. 11; 12. 1.—[u] Chap. 10. 6.—[6] Or, *to the king of Jareb:* or, *to the king* that *should plead.*

walked after the commandment—R. V. "he was content to walk after *man's* command." As the *italics* in R. V. indicate, the original reads simply, "he was content to walk after a command." *Command*—in Hebrew a rare word, occurring again only in Isa. xxviii, 10, 13—is interpreted to mean a human statute as opposed to the divine command; here the institution introduced in Israel at the command of Jeroboam I, the worship of the calves at Beth-el and Dan, which was largely responsible for present religious conditions. One would expect a less ambiguous phrase, if this were the thought. LXX. and Peshitto have a different word though similar in sound, *vanity*, for *commandment;* the former would be a designation of the Baalim (compare Jer. xviii, 15); Isaiah frequently calls idols "nothings." *He was content* might be translated "it pleased him," or "he desired." These versions may have preserved the original: "he desired to walk after vanity." The result of such conduct is the gradual dissolution of the nation, caused by influences from within, which, according to verse 12, are set in motion by Jehovah himself (compare Isa. iii, 1ff.). **Therefore will I be**—Better, *but as for me, I was*, that is, in the past. **Moth . . . rottenness**—The second, better, *worm eating*, the process by which the worm destroys wood and flesh. Both symbolize forces that destroy slowly but surely (Job xiii, 28). The dissolution of Israel was caused as much by anarchy and corruption within as by invasion from without.

13. The eyes of the two kingdoms could not remain closed forever to this condition of affairs, but they failed to seek help where alone it could be found. "It is the old but ever-repeated attempt to remove evil within by the use of external means instead of putting within the decaying frame new and sound powers; to rely upon the external cult and upon politics rather than upon religion and ethics" (Marti). **Sickness . . . wound**—Figures, not of corruption but of disaster resulting from corruption (Isa. i, 5). **The Assyrian** ["Assyria"]—The great world empire having its seat between the Euphrates and the Tigris. Only a few years previous to this prophecy, in 745, it had entered upon the most flourishing period of its history, when Tiglath-pileser III came upon the throne. **And sent**—Who? As the text stands there can be but one answer, Ephraim. Comparing 13a with 13b, some supply Judah. To do this makes the line too long; therefore they omit the verb, so that the clauses read, "Then went Ephraim to Assyria, and Judah to King Jareb." The character of Hebrew parallelism favors the insertion of the subject, but there are difficulties in the way of making it Judah (see next comment). **King Jareb**—The last word is apparently a form of the verb *strive, contend;* margin, R. V., "a king that should contend"; x, 6, makes it clear that it is an epithet of the king of Assyria. As such it has been variously rendered by translators, "combatant," "combative," "striver," "pick-quarrel," "fighting cock," etc. Any one of these would make a suitable nickname for several Assyrian kings. Who is in the mind of Hosea? That the prophet is referring to an actual historical event cannot be doubted; that he is thinking of a recent event is quite likely. 2 Kings xv, 19, 20, mentions Menahem as sending a present to Pul of Assyria in order to win his support. This was

yet could he not heal you, nor cure you of your wound. 14 For [x]I *will be* unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah: [y]I, *even* I, will tear and go away; I will take away, and none shall rescue *him*.

15 I will go *and* return to my place, [7]till [z]they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: [a]in their affliction they will seek me early.

[x] Lam. 3.10; chap. 13. 7, 8.—[y] Psa. 50. 22.—[7] Heb. *till they be guilty.*

[z] Lev. 26. 40, 41; Jer. 29. 12, 13; Ezek. 6. 9; 20. 43; 36. 31.—[a] Psa. 78. 34.

in the period of anarchy following the death of Jeroboam II. The prophecy of Hosea comes from that period; it is therefore very probable that the reference is to this appeal. Pul is universally identified with Tiglath-pileser III, a fighter through and through. Judah was not involved in the event recorded in 2 Kings xv, 19, 20; so far as we know, no appeal was sent from Judah to Assyria until the time of Ahaz (2 Kings xvi, 7, 8), about four years after Menahem's appeal, and subsequent to the date of Hosea's prophecy (see Introduction, p. 17). For this reason it is not likely that *Judah* should be supplied as the subject; it is better to leave the text as it is; if it is thought necessary to mention the subject, why not *Israel?* (Compare verses 3, 5, 9, etc.) The interpretation of *Jareb* suggested above is based upon the supposition that the present Hebrew text is correct. Other interpretations need but to be mentioned. Hommel, also following the present Hebrew text, translates "king of Aribi," a district in northern Arabia; Winckler, with a slight change, "king of Yathrib-Medina," that is, North Arabia; in view of x, 6, these interpretations are improbable. Maintaining that the reference is to the king of Assyria, some have suggested a slight alteration so as to read "the great king," identical with the Assyrian *sharru rabû* found frequently in the inscriptions (compare Isa. xxxvi, 4, where a different word is used). LXX. presupposes a still different reading, which may be intended for "the high king." He is unable to render effective assistance since one mightier than he has caused the disease.

In verse 14 the fierceness of the judgment and the impotence of all human helpers are pictured once more. Jehovah likens himself to a lion who seizes his prey, tears it, carries it off, and no one has the power to prevent it (xiii, 7; Isa. v, 29; xxxi, 4). I—Emphatic, to call attention to the fact that Jehovah himself is the lion. **Lion . . . young lion**—The Hebrew has several words for *lion* which, though originally having distinct meanings, are used interchangeably. The root meaning of the two words used here is uncertain; it is thought that the first calls attention to the lion's roar, the second to his mane. Lions are found no longer in Palestine.

Verse 15 is the continuation of 14; by some it is thought to be a later expansion of that verse, but this supposition is not necessary; it may well come from Hosea. As a lion withdraws into his den, so Jehovah, having executed judgment, will retire; this will make it impossible for the torn prey to find a deliverer or healer. Only when he is sought earnestly will he come forth from his hiding place. **My place**—The heavenly dwelling place of Jehovah (Mic. i, 3). **Acknowledge their offense**—R. V., "have borne their guilt," that is, have suffered the punishment for their guilt; LXX., "they become startled." The ordinary rendering is to be preferred, though it might be intensified by translating, "become conscious of their guilt." **Seek my face**—To plead for his return and favor. Jehovah knows that they will soon do it. **In their affliction**—Affliction will be a sign of the divine displeasure and a proof of the people's inability to help themselves; therefore they will turn to Jehovah (Amos viii, 12). **Seek me early**—The R. V. translation "earnestly" rests upon a misinterpretation of vi, 1–3, which is taken wrongly as

CHAPTER VI.

COME, and let us return unto the LORD: for [a]he hath torn, and [b]he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. 2 [c]After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. 3 [d]Then shall we know, *if* we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared

[a] Deut. 32. 39; 1 Sam. 2. 6; Job 5. 18; chap. 5. 14.

[b] Jer. 30. 17.—[c] 1 Cor. 15. 4.—[d] Isa. 54. 13.

an expression of genuine repentance. The verb is derived from a noun, *dawn, morning,* and means *to seek early,* or *soon;* it is used here in a temporal sense. G. A. Smith reproduces the thought correctly, "they will soon enough seek me."

CHAPTER VI

The People's Return to Jehovah, vi, 1–3.

The first three verses of chapter vi form the natural continuation of v, 15, with which LXX. connects them by prefixing "saying." This addition explains them as a mutual exhortation to return to Jehovah. While *saying* may have been added by the Greek translator, it embodies undoubtedly a correct interpretation. As expected, they will return, but without real, heartfelt repentance. There is not one expression of sorrow for wrongdoing, only anxiety to have distress and calamity removed. Therefore Jehovah is not impressed with the supplication (verses 4ff.). The verses offer "but one symptom of the optimism of this light-hearted people, whom no discipline and no judgment can impress with the reality of their incurable decay." Giesebrecht's interpretation of the passage as a new exhortation by the prophet is less natural. **He will heal us**—The context shows that they desire healing, not from corruption and sin, but from the wounds inflicted by the punishment. Such desire is no indication of repentance. **Two days . . . third day**—The combination of a numeral with the next above is called *ascending enumeration;* it expresses an indefinite or unlimited number (G.-K., 134s); here an indefinite period but, since the numbers are small, a short period. The deliverance will come in the briefest time possible. **Revive . . . raise us up**—A hope of a resurrection, but evidently not a personal resurrection, and certainly not, as some commentators used to say, a direct prediction of the resurrection of Jesus. Rather a hope of national restoration from a period of calamity and distress. The allegory of the dry bones (Ezek. xxxvii, 1–10) is an expansion of this hope. That the verb does not always mean restoration to life from death is clearly shown by such passages as Josh. v, 8, where it is translated "become whole"; 2 Kings viii, 9, "recover," etc. The result of the divine interference will be that they **live in his sight** ["before him"]—In his presence, with his eye resting upon them in loving and protecting care (Gen. xvii, 18; compare the opposite thought in v, 15; Isa. viii, 17). **Then shall we know**—Better R. V., "And let us know." The lack of the knowledge of Jehovah (iv, 6; compare ii, 20), the secret of all their trouble, they seek to remove; again there is no confession of sin; no evidence that they seek to know him in order to live better, only that they may enjoy his gifts. **If we follow on**—Better, R. V., "let us follow on." The same verb is translated in ii, 7, "follow after"; it expresses the persistence with which they will seek Jehovah. If only the motive had been otherwise! They are confident that Jehovah will speedily respond. As surely as the morning dawns from day to day, so surely will Jehovah manifest himself. **Going forth**—That is, to heal, to bind up, to bless. LXX. suggests a different reading, requiring a different division and slight rearrangement of the consonantal text, "As soon as we seek

[e]as the morning; and [f]he shall come unto us [g]as the rain, as the latter *and* former rain unto the earth.

4 [h]O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your [i]goodness *is* [i]as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away. 5 Therefore have I hewed *them* [k]by the prophets; I have slain them by [l]the words of my mouth: [2]and thy judgments *are as* the light *that* goeth forth. 6 For I desired [m]mercy, and [n]not sacrifice; and the [o]knowledge of

[e] 2 Sam. 23. 4.—[f] Psa. 72. 6.—[g] Job 29. 23.—[h] Chap. 11. 8.—[i] Or, *mercy*, or, *kindness*.—[i] Chap. 13. 3.—[k] Jer. 1. 10; 5. 14.—[l] Jer. 23. 29; Heb. 4. 12.

[2] Or, *that thy judgments might be*, etc.
—[m] 1 Sam. 15. 22; Eccl. 5. 1; Mic. 6. 8; Matt. 9. 13; 12. 7.—[n] Psa. 50.8, 9; Prov. 21. 3; Isa. 1. 11.—[o] Jer. 22. 16; John 17. 3.

him we shall find him," which fits admirably in the context and is accepted as original by several modern commentators. **As the rain** —Heb. *geshem* (see on Joel ii, 23); in contrast with the rain mentioned in the next clause it might be called *winter rain*. Not only as regularly but also as beneficially as this rain will Jehovah show himself. **As the latter and former rain unto the earth** —R. V., more accurately, "as the latter rain that watereth the earth." On this rain also see on Joel ii, 23.

JEHOVAH'S REPLY: SUPERFICIAL REPENTANCE IS NOT ACCEPTABLE TO JEHOVAH—THE CORRUPTION SEEMS INCURABLE, vi, 4–11a.

No distinct break can be recognized between vi, 4, and viii, 14. The whole section is a severe denunciation of the people's attitude toward Jehovah. Verse 4 may be regarded as the direct reply to the people's plea. Jehovah perceives that the sentiments expressed in vi, 1–3, are superficial. But if all he has done has not wrought repentance, what can he do with them? From this question he passes immediately to point out their utter misconception of the divine commands and their rebellious career.

4, 5. **What shall I do unto thee** — What more can I do to move you to heartfelt repentance? **Goodness**—In ii, 19, "lovingkindness" (see comment there); here the loving attitude and disposition toward Jehovah. It is unstable and fickle; "evanescent and transient, like the morning cloud which is dispersed by the rising sun," and like the dew which remains but for a little time. **Therefore**—This fickleness has compelled Jehovah to use severe means. **Hewed . . . by the prophets**—He carefully carved them like a piece of hard wood or marble, which requires hard and effective blows. He sought to make Israel a holy nation through the efforts of the prophets. **Slain them by the words of my mouth**—As spoken by the prophets. The words of Jehovah have power to kill (Isa. xi, 4; compare ix, 8; xlix, 2); here is meant not so much extinction of life as infliction of severe judgments. The activity of Elijah and Elisha may be in the prophet's mind. **Thy judgments are as the light that goeth forth**—Better, R. V. margin, following several ancient versions, "my judgments," that is, the penal judgments of Jehovah. The thought is the same as in the preceding clauses, and the whole sentence is translated most naturally, "My judgment went forth as the light," that is, so that all could see it and profit thereby. Sometimes the Hebrew *light* is used in the sense of *lightning;* if so in this case, it calls attention to the terrible character of the divine judgments.

6. Why does Jehovah use these severe means? Because he has for the people a lofty ideal of righteousness to which they are strangers and against which they rebel. His ideal is **mercy**—R. V. "goodness." See on ii, 19; used here in all the fullness of its meaning. **Sacrifice**—The whole external ceremonial service. The attitude of Hosea is that of the other eighth century prophets (Amos v, 21ff.; Isa. i, 11ff.; Mic. vi, 6ff.). Did these prophets intend to condemn sacrifice as such? Did they desire to

God more than burnt offerings. 7 But they [3]like men [p]have transgressed the covenant: there [q]have they dealt treacherously against me.

[3] Or, *like Adam*, Job 31. 33.

[p] Chap. 8. 1.—[q] Chap. 5. 7.

abolish it entirely? Some think they did; but all the passages referred to bear a different interpretation. The people addressed were corrupt, steeped in sin, living under the false impression that the bringing of sacrifice met all religious requirements. Condemnation of sacrifices offered by these people, in this spirit, does not necessarily imply condemnation of sacrifice offered in the proper spirit by a penitent people. Besides, there are passages which show that the prophets did not discard sacrifice entirely. A prophet who considers the discontinuation of sacrifice a national calamity (ix, 1ff.; compare iii, 4; Isa. xix, 21; Jer. xvii, 26; xxxiii, 18) cannot be understood as condemning all sacrifice. The prophets were not abolitionists, but reformers; they attacked the abuses of sacrifice and sought to place the emphasis where it belonged, on the life and spirit (1 Sam. xv, 22). This the passage before us is intended to do. (See article "Sacrifice" in Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible*, and last sermon in Driver, *Sermons on the Old Testament*.) **Knowledge of God**—See on ii, 20. **Burnt offerings**—The offerings entirely consecrated to God and completely burned upon the altar (Lev. i, 3ff.; compare Amos. v, 22; Mic. vi, 6).

With verse 7 begins a description of the people's corruption, the depth of which proves that they are incorrigible. **Transgressed the covenant**—Made with Israel at the time of the Exodus, when Jehovah adopted the nation as his child. **Like men**—A much-discussed expression. If the translation of A. V. is correct, the thought is, *in human fashion*, as men are wont to do; recognizing a tendency in unregenerate men to break covenants, the law written in the human heart (Job xxxi, 33). Others consider *men* to be a designation of the neighboring nations. Israel, with all his special privileges, has broken the divine covenant like the heathen nations who enjoyed none of these. R. V. margin translates, with less probability and force, "they are as men that have transgressed a covenant." The Revisers embodied in the text a translation favored by many moderns, "they like *Adam* have transgressed." True, there is no statement in the Old Testament that Jehovah made a covenant with Adam, or that the latter broke such a covenant, but the command which God gave and which Adam broke was in the nature of a covenant; for on obedience to it depended continued fellowship with God. All the interpretations are based upon the text as it now stands; they all give fairly acceptable sense. **There**—Where? Some say the northern kingdom, to which the prophet turns with a "gesture of indignation"; others, the localities mentioned in 8ff. Ordinarily *there* refers to a locality already named. The divergence from the rule in this case leads some commentators to suspect in the word translated "like Adam" or "like men" the corrupt name of a locality. With very slight alterations one could read "in Edom," or "in Aram," or "in Admah" (xi, 8); Marti suggests the modern *Tel-ed-Damije*, near the juncture of the Jabbok with the Jordan; Cheyne, *Beth-aven*. None of these places, except Beth-aven (Beth-el), is known as connected with special transgressions, and any conjecture must remain more or less doubtful. If the present Hebrew text is retained *there* must refer to Israel.

Two illustrations of Israel's depravity are given in verses 8, 9. **Gilead**—Here and in Judg. x, 17, apparently the name of a city, everywhere else the name of the territory east of the Jordan. If a city, its location is not known. Among others,

8 [r]Gilead *is* a city of them that work iniquity, *and is* [s]polluted with blood
9 And as troops of robbers wait for a man, *so* [t]the company of priests murder in the way [u]by consent: for they commit [v]lewdness. 10 I have seen [w]an horrible thing in the house of Israel: there *is* [x]the whoredom of Ephraim, Israel is defiled. 11 Also, O Judah, [y]he hath set an harvest for thee, [z]when I returned the captivity of my people.

[r] Chap. 12. 11.—[s] Or, *cunning for blood.*—[t] Jer. 11. 9; Ezek. 22. 25; chap. 5. 1, 2.—[u] Heb. *with* one *shoulder*, or, *to Shechem.*

[v] Or, *enormity.*—[w] Jer. 5. 30.—[x] Chap. 4. 12, 13, 17.—[y] Jer. 51. 33; Joel 3. 13; Rev. 14. 15.—[z] Psa. 126. 1.

Ramoth-gilead, Jabesh-gilead, Mizpah-gilead, and *Gal'ûd*, south of the Jabbok, have been suggested. **Them that work iniquity**—Why this locality receives special condemnation is not known; it must have been the scene of some startling outbreak of violence. If Gilead could be interpreted as the whole territory east of the Jordan the reference might be to some of the assassinations subsequent to the death of Jeroboam II. Shallum (2 Kings xv, 10) may have been a Gileadite (compare name of his father); Gileadites were also involved in the murder of Pekah (2 Kings xv, 25). **Polluted** ["stained"] **with blood**—Not the blood of idolatrous sacrifices, but a figure of violence and bloodshed. The verb is a derivative of the noun *heel;* Cheyne renders aptly, "tracked with bloody footprints." **By consent**—Better, R. V., "toward Shechem," a town frequently mentioned in the Old Testament; it is located among the hills of Ephraim, about thirty-one and a half miles north of Jerusalem; now *Nablûs.*

The Hebrew text of verse 9 is obscure; it may have suffered in transmission. As a translation of the present Hebrew text, margin R. V. is more satisfactory than R. V. or A. V.: "And as robbers lying in wait, so the company of priests murder in the way toward Shechem; yea, they have committed lewdness." The thought is that even the priests have fallen from their holy estate and have become highway robbers. The prophet probably refers to a well-known recent event, though now unknown. For "*the* company" read, with the Hebrew, "*a* company"; for "murder," "murdered." **Lewdness**—Here equivalent to the more general *outrage.*

Verses 10, 11 sum up the accusation. Wherever the eye of Jehovah falls, he sees a **horrible thing . . . whoredom**—The former signifies abominations and crimes of every kind (Jer. xviii, 13); the second, the one outstanding sin, spiritual and literal whoredom. **Israel is defiled**—Compare v, 3. In verse 11 the prophet turns to Judah. This verse and vii, 1a, are thought by some to be a later addition; so that vii, 1b, "uncovered is the iniquity of Ephraim," would be the continuation of vi, 10. The omitted words might, indeed, be left out without affecting seriously the thought of the prophet, but that is not sufficient reason for rejecting them. LXX. differs from the Hebrew, and in some respects is to be preferred. Following LXX. part of verse 11 should probably be connected with vii, 1, chapter vi, closing, "Also, O Judah, there is a harvest appointed to thee." **Harvest**—Figure of judgment (Joel iii, 13; Jer. li, 33). Judah, as corrupt as Israel, must share the latter's fate. 11b, in the same construction as the opening words of vii, 1, should be taken with the latter and rendered, "When I would turn the fortune of my people, when I would heal Israel." **Returned** ["bring back"] **the captivity**—The Hebrew phrase which is frequently thus rendered in the Old Testament is literally *turn a turning.* In some cases the turning involved is the restoration from exile; in others a more general idea is expressed, a *turning* in the fortunes of the people, of calamity into prosperity; and this latter meaning is suitable in every

CHAPTER VII.

WHEN I would have healed Israel, then the iniquity of Ephraim was discovered, and the [1]wickedness of Samaria: for [a]they commit falsehood; and the thief cometh in, *and* the troop of robbers [2]spoileth without. 2 And they [3]consider not in their hearts *that* I [b]remember all their wickedness: now [c]their own doings have beset them about; they are [d]before my face. 3 They make the king glad with their wickedness, and the princes [e]with their lies. 4 [f]They *are* all adulterers, as an oven heated by the baker, [4]*who* ceaseth [5]from raising after he hath kneaded the dough,

[1] Heb. *evils.*——[a] Chaps. 5. 1; 6. 10.——[2] Heb. *strippeth.*——[3] Heb. *say not to.*——[b] Jer. 17. 1.——[c] Psa. 9. 16; Prov. 5. 22.

[d] Psa. 90. 8.——[e] Rom. 1. 32.——[f] Jer. 9. 2.——[4] Or, *the raiser will cease.*——[5] Or, *from waking.*

place where the phrase occurs (Amos ix, 14; Zeph. ii, 7, etc.). So here, "When I would turn the fortunes of my people."

CHAPTER VII.

NEW PICTURE OF THE MORAL CORRUPTION AND RESULTING ANARCHY, vi, 11b–vii, 7.

1, 2. The mercy of Jehovah, manifesting itself in his willingness to "heal," wrought no change for the better; it was interpreted as an indication of Jehovah's weakness, and only increased the people's recklessness. **Iniquity . . . discovered** ["uncovered"]—The reflexive force of the verb form may be expressed by rendering "displayed itself." Iniquity broke out with ever-increasing force and prevented the carrying out of God's gracious purpose. **Samaria**—The capital of the northern kingdom mentioned because it was the center of the corruption. Wherein consisted the iniquity? **Commit falsehood**—Practice fraud and deceit toward God and man. **Thief cometh** ["entereth"] **in**—Into the house. Theft and highway robbery were common (Joel ii, 9). **Spoileth** ["ravageth"]—The highways were made unsafe by robbers in quest of plunder. **Consider**—Literally, *they do not speak to their heart;* their consciences have become seared. **I remember**—They have no thought that Jehovah will remember and punish, but they are mistaken; their sins are constantly before his face, where he can see them. **Their own doings have beset them about**—They are completely surrounded by their wrongs, so that escape has become impossible; even repentance seems to be out of the question. The verse closes with a reaffirmation that Jehovah is not deceived about their real condition (Psa. xc, 8).

In verses 3–7 the text is in places obscure, but concerning the general drift of the thought there can be no doubt. The prophet describes in vivid colors the corruption that pervades the whole nation, and shows that the existing anarchy is the inevitable result of the same: adultery, drunkenness, conspiracy, assassinations everywhere, not one redeeming feature. **They make the king glad**—The subject is the same as in verses 1, 2, the Israelites. As representatives of Jehovah king and princes should rejoice in righteousness and justice; their depravity is seen in the fact that they not only fail to punish crime, but actually delight in it. **Princes**—See on iii, 4. The Hebrew gives good sense; the emendation first suggested by Wellhausen and since adopted by many scholars, "they anoint" instead of "they make glad," is not necessary, though it would give equally good sense and would make this passage agree in meaning with viii, 4. **They are all adulterers**—King, princes, and people are filled with unholy passions for revelry, licentiousness, etc. This is a new condemnation, and is not to be connected with the preceding as a circumstantial clause. The rest of the verse is doubtful. **As an oven heated by the baker**—R. V. supplies "they are," which is an improvement.

until it be leavened. 5 In the day of our king the princes have made *him* sick [6]with bottles of wine; he stretched out his hand with scorn-

[6] Or, *with heat through wine.*

ers. 6 For they have [7]made ready their heart like an oven, whiles they lie in wait: their baker sleepeth all the night; in the morning it burneth

[7] Or, *applied.*

A different division of the consonantal text would give, "they are like a burning oven," and with "the baker" the new sentence might be begun. This is preferable. In their madness the people resemble a burning oven. The heart is the oven, the unholy passions the fire. Modern commentators are inclined to regard this clause, as well as the rest of verse 4, a later addition, a gloss to verse 6. Whatever one may think of the rest of the verse, which seems to be dependent on verse 6, this clause certainly sounds like a part of the original denunciation; verse 5 would make a good continuation. **The baker . . . ceaseth**—As these words stand now they describe the apparent calm between one outbreak of violence and the next. "The baker ceases from stirring when the oven has reached a certain heat; and then he leaves the fire to smolder until the fermentation of the dough is complete and fresh heating is necessary. So after passion has been gratified it smolders for a time, but is afterward kindled to a greater heat than before, when some attractive object comes within range."

In verse 5 the prophet evidently refers to a recent event—Wellhausen thinks to a royal assassination—when passion found unrestrained expression. **Day of our king**—Perhaps the king's birthday (Matt. xiv, 6), or the coronation day; at any rate, a day of joyful celebration. **The princes have made him sick**—R. V., "made themselves sick." Either translation is possible, though usage favors A. V.—they made the king drunk and assassinated him (2 Sam. xiii, 28, 29). Royal assassinations are referred to in verse 7; in this verse, however, the thought implied in R. V. is more probable, though usage may favor A. V.—they gave themselves to such excesses that they became ill. **Bottles of wine**—Better, R. V., "heat of wine," or "with fever from wine" (G. A. Smith). **He stretched out his hand**—The meaning is uncertain, but it is generally interpreted as meaning that the king entered into intimate relations with *scoffers*, that is, worthless, lawless fellows who are always devising mischief. Perhaps the words allude to "some lawless project decided upon in the intoxication of the revel."

Verses 6, 7 do not connect with 4, giving the explanation and ground for the simile of the oven, so that verse 5 would be parenthetical (Keil); they contain a new assertion, coördinate with the statements in verses 3, 4, 5. The subject is the same as in the other verses, the Israelites. **For**—Here not a causal conjunction, but, as often, a particle of asseveration—"truly," "indeed" (G.-K., 148d). **Have made ready their heart like an oven, while they lie in wait**—The Hebrew contains several peculiarities, hence the translation and interpretation are uncertain. Many attempts have been made to interpret the present Hebrew text and not a few emendations have been suggested. It seems necessary to alter the text. Following in part LXX., we get, by only slight alterations, an excellent thought: "Indeed, like an oven their hearts burn with their intriguing" (compare iv, 1, "There is no truth in the land"; iv, 2, "There is naught but swearing and breaking faith"). **Their baker**—Who is their baker? The subject of *burneth* is the same in Hebrew as that of *sleepeth*. Can it be said of the baker that he burns as a flaming fire? Two ancient versions, Targum and Peshitto, read "their anger" for "their baker"; this requires no change of the consonantal text in Hebrew and may be

as a flaming fire. 7 They are all hot as an oven, and have devoured their judges; [g]all their kings [h]are fallen: [i]*there is* none among them that calleth unto me. 8 Ephraim, he [k]hath mixed himself among the people;

[g] Chap. 8. 4.—[h] 2 Kings 15. 10, 14, 25, 30.

[i] Isa. 64. 7.—[k] Psa. 106. 35.

accepted as original: "Their anger sleepeth all the night." The conspiracy is kept secret until it is matured, then it breaks forth. The darkness of the night is the time when the schemes are developed; in the morning, the time for action having arrived, the conspiracy blazes forth (compare Mic. ii, 1). Verse 7 describes the result of these intrigues. **They are all hot as an oven, and have devoured** ["and devour"]—Need not be rejected as an unnecessary repetition; it sums up in a few words the thought of verse 6. It would be better, however, to translate it as a circumstantial clause, "Being (thus) hot like an oven, they devour." **Judges**—Not to be understood in the narrower sense of that term, but equivalent to *rulers*, that is, king and princes as the guardians of the law and administrators of justice (Isa. xl, 23; Psa. ii, 10). **Their kings are fallen**—By assassination; parallel to the preceding clause. 2 Kings xv furnishes a commentary. In all probability the prophecy comes from the reign of Menahem, which was preceded by two royal assassinations, that of Zechariah after a reign of six months and that of Shallum after one month. There is none among the people that **calleth unto me**—"A prophetic touch to the historical statement" which precedes. Notwithstanding the serious condition of affairs, no one appealed to Jehovah, who alone could bring relief.

ISRAEL, BLIND IN HER FOLLY, RUSHES HEADLONG TO DESTRUCTION, vii, 8–16a.

Verses 8–16a connect very closely with the last clause of verse 7, but these verses differ so much from the preceding in matter and form that they may be treated as a separate section. Instead of turning to Jehovah the people mingled with the foreign nations, there to learn wisdom and to find help; unaware that by this policy they were courting certain destruction. What a disappointment the chosen nation has proved! 8. **Ephraim**—As elsewhere, Israel. **Hath mixed himself among the people**—R. V., following the Hebrew, "peoples," that is, the surrounding nations. Israel has given up its divinely appointed seclusion and has mingled with the surrounding nations by (1) adopting their customs and (2) appealing to them for help. The two forms of apostasy were closely connected, the first being the inevitable result of the second. The people who had lost their faith in Jehovah, which would prompt reliance upon him in political matters, could not endure (compare Isa. vii); their apostasy must be followed by doom (Isa. vii, 9). **A cake not turned**—The cake alluded to here is round and flat, baked on a hot stone; if not turned it burns on the bottom while the top remains unbaked. A threefold interpretation of the figure is possible. It is either a picture of ruin—as a cake not turned is burned on the bottom, so Israel is already half ruined (verse 9 would furnish the explanation); or a picture of folly and inconsistency, like as the modern colloquial "half baked," "an apt emblem of a character full of inconsistencies" (to this verse 11 would supply a commentary); or, in the third place, a picture of the internal condition of the people—"How better describe a half-fed people, a half-cultured society, a half-lived religion, a half-hearted policy, than by a half-baked scone?" Perhaps all three thoughts were in the mind of the prophet.

Verse 9 calls attention to the blindness which prevented Israel from recognizing its helpless condition. **He,**

Ephraim is a cake not turned. **9** [l]Strangers have devoured his strength and he knoweth *it* not: yea, gray hairs are [s]here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not. **10** And the [m]pride of Israel testifieth to his face: and [n]they do not return to the LORD their God, nor seek him for all this.

11 [o]Ephraim also is like a silly dove without heart: [p]they call to

[l] Chap. 8. 7.—[s] Heb. *sprinkled.*—[m] Chap. 5. 5.—[n] Isa. 9. 13.

[o] Chap. 11. 11.—[p] See 2 Kings 15. 19; 17. 4; chaps. 5. 13; 9. 3; 12. 1.

Ephraim, **knoweth it not**—Not only, he does not understand the *significance* of the calamity, but he is blind and in absolute ignorance concerning it. **Strangers have devoured his strength**—The foreign nations, instead of helping and strengthening, have sapped his resources. If the above-given interpretation is correct the reference cannot be primarily to territory lost in war, though this may not be excluded entirely (2 Kings viii, 12; x, 32, 33; xiii, 3, 7), but to the strength and resources lost by adopting foreign customs and entering into alliances with foreign nations. The introduction of foreign customs was accompanied by moral degradation. That immorality saps the strength of nations needs no proof. "Moral decay means political decay; sins . . . are the gangrene of nations." That foreign alliances sapped the nation's resources is definitely stated in 2 Kings xv, 19, 20; compare xvi, 7, 8. Hosea may have had in mind the act of Menahem. **Gray hairs are here and there upon him**—Literally, *are sprinkled upon him.* The nation is personified as an individual passing through the various stages of life (compare xi, 1; Isa. xlvi, 4). Gray hair is an indication of old age, of impending death and dissolution. To all this the nation is blind.

The connection of verse 10 with the preceding verse is obscure; perhaps it is unfortunate that the verse division was made where it now is, for 10a closely connects with the preceding, while 10b gives expression to a new thought and logically connects more closely with verse 11. **The pride of Israel testifieth**—The proud and arrogant attitude toward Jehovah, manifesting itself in blindness (see on v, 5). **For all this**—Though apparently all resources are sapped, and the nation is rapidly approaching dissolution, they have not returned to Jehovah nor sought him who alone could heal and restore the lost strength (Amos iv, 6ff.; compare Isa. ix, 12ff.). Instead—verse 11—like a silly dove they sought help where not only no help could be found but where their hurt increased. Marti omits verse 10, but without sufficient reason. **Silly dove without heart** ["understanding"]—The dove is celebrated for its simplicity and unsuspicious nature (Matt. x, 16). An Arabic proverb says, "There is nothing more simple than a dove." **Egypt . . . Assyria**—To the action of a silly dove is likened the policy of Israel past and present. The point of comparison is the absence of any settled plan or fixed purpose. Now they appeal to the one, now to the other, without regard for possible dangers. The additional thought brought out by many commentators, "As a dove fleeing from a hawk is snared in the fowler's net, so Ephraim when afraid of Assyria calls in the help of Egypt, and when afraid of Egypt appeals to Assyria," is not contained in the text. Israel is seeking to escape, not from Assyria or from Egypt, but from its own helpless condition (8, 9); in this attempt it does not seek help from Jehovah (10), but now from Egypt and now from Assyria (11), as the Egyptian or the Assyrian party may predominate. 2 Kings xv, 19, illustrates the pro-Assyrian policy; of the pro-Egyptian policy we have no indication in the historical books as early as the date of this prophecy, but compare 2 Kings xvii, 4, which speaks of events about a dozen years later.

12. Such policy is contrary to the

Egypt, they go to Assyria. 12 When they shall go, [q]I will spread my net upon them; I will bring them down as the fowls of the heaven; I will chastise them, [r]as their congregation hath heard. 13 Woe unto them! for they have fled from me: [9]destruction unto them! because they have transgressed against me: though [s]I have redeemed them,

[q] Ezek. 12. 13.—[r] Lev. 26. 14, etc.; Deut. 28. 15, etc.; 2 Kings 17. 13, 18.

[9] Heb. *spoil.*—[s] Mic. 6. 4.

will of Jehovah, therefore he will make it of no effect; yea, he will severely punish them for it. As they go to Egypt or Assyria, thinking to find relief, Jehovah will bring upon them sudden ruin. **Net**—The figure of the dove is continued. The silly dove, Israel, will be entangled in the net of calamity and ruin. **I will bring them down**—A poetic parallel to the preceding. Just as the birds of the air are brought down and captured by the fowler, so Jehovah will bring down Israel from the air of freedom into the net of exile. The latter part of verse 12 is obscure. **As their congregation hath heard**—As has been publicly proclaimed by the prophets, for example, Amos and Hosea. The ancient versions reproduce a different text, and various emendations have been proposed: Marti, "on account of their sins," Harper, "by the abundance of their afflictions." The Hebrew is peculiar, but certainty as to the original is impossible. Harper's transposition of "I will chastise" so that it follows verse 10 does not improve the text. That the words might be omitted from their present place is true; that they "furnish just the required completion for the thought of verse 10" is, to say the least, doubtful, since verse 11 furnishes a proper continuation of verse 10.

The announcement of judgment in verse 12 is continued in verse 13 in the form of a "Woe," which is in turn explained by the exclamation, "destruction unto them!" There is, indeed, no escape; their rebellion has been too persistent. **They have fled** ["wandered"] **from me**—The special sin condemned is not spiritual or moral, but political, apostasy; instead of seeking help from Jehovah they have sought it from Assyria and Egypt. As the second exclamation is an explanation of the first, so the second causal clause is an expansion of the first. The wandering away involved rebellion against the rightful master. **Transgressed**—Better, *rebelled*, or, *apostatized*. The exact rendering and interpretation of 13b are uncertain. **Though I have redeemed . . . they have spoken lies.** Refers to actual past deliverances and expressions of ingratitude. R. V., "though I would redeem . . . they have spoken lies," emphasizes the willingness or desire of Jehovah to redeem, which is met by defiance. Others take the sentence conditionally, "If I should redeem . . . they would only speak lies," or as a question of astonishment, "And I, should I redeem them, and they spoke only lies," or, "when they have spoken only lies!" A still different though similar rendering makes it an exclamation of astonishment, "And I redeem them when they have spoken only lies!" The Hebrew permits any one of these renderings; the context must determine the correct one. Verse 14 makes it probable that "they have spoken lies" refers to an act of the past. As to the preceding clause it would seem, in view of the apparently unconditional announcement of judgment, that one of the last two interpretations must be accepted. Between the two there is little to choose. The words are a reply to a possible objection on the part of the people that destruction would be unjust; they set forth the truth that divine displeasure is well deserved. Additional justification is offered in verse 14—they have never sought Jehovah in sincerity. **Spoken lies**—In saying by word or deed that

yet they have spoken lies against me. **14** [t]And they have not cried unto me with their heart, when they howled upon their beds: they assemble themselves for corn and wine, *and* they rebel against me. **15** Though I [10]have bound *and* strengthened their arms, yet do they imagine mischief against me. **16** [u]They return, *but* not

[t] Job 35. 9, 10; Psa. 78. 36; Jer. 3. 10; Zech. 7. 5.

[10] Or, *chastened.*—[u]Chap. 11. 7.

Jehovah was unwilling or unable to help (Isa. xliv, 8); they surely did not know God (compare iv, 6). **Not cried unto me with their heart**—The people had not ceased entirely to worship Jehovah, or to call upon him, but their petitions were insincere; they did not come from the heart (Isa. xxix, 13). **Howled upon their beds**—In distress and despair they roll upon their beds unable to sleep. Since 14b refers to attempts to secure the favor and good will of Jehovah by acts of worship, the *howling* would better be connected with religious celebrations, perhaps the howling connected with sacrificial feasts (Amos v, 23); for "bed" we must then read "divans," or "couches," upon which they reclined during their meals. A simple emendation would give "beside their altars," which is accepted by some commentators. Other emendations are less satisfactory. **Assemble themselves**—The derivation, and therefore also the meaning of the Hebrew verb form, is uncertain. The English translation suggests a gathering together in solemn assembly at the sanctuary for the purpose of imploring Jehovah for a rich harvest. Another possible rendering is, *they excite themselves,* that is, in connection with the worship. LXX. presents a different text; changing one consonant, ך, into another, ד, it reads, "they cut themselves" (compare 1 Kings xviii, 28; Deut. xiv, 1; Jer. xvi, 6, etc.). In some way this self-mutilation, condemned by the religious leaders of Israel, was thought to secure the divine favor. Whatever the exact meaning of the word, the prophet evidently speaks of some selfish efforts connected with the heartless worship to secure material blessings from Jehovah. **They rebel against me**—Notwithstanding their religious zeal, they are rebels against Jehovah's majesty.

15, 16. Neither judgment nor the divine mercy produced repentance or loyalty to Jehovah. **Bound**—Better, R. V., "taught" (Isa. xxviii, 26; Prov. xxxi, 1); margin, "chastened." The object, *their arms,* in Hebrew goes with both verbs; *chasten,* therefore, gives no suitable sense, "taught" or "trained" is better; perhaps a reference to divine help in war (2 Kings xiv, 27; compare Psa. xviii, 34); or perhaps only a figurative expression for restoration of prosperity. By such help Jehovah expected to win the hearts of the people, but he failed. Symmachus, an early Greek translator, gives a different sense to the passage by reading after the first verb the pronoun, "I chastened *them,*" that is, by the judgment implied in verse 14; he understands only the second verb as calling attention to the giving of prosperity. Whether Jehovah sent calamity or prosperity the people persisted in rebellion. LXX. omits the first verb; it makes verse 14 refer, by implication, to one method of God's dealings, chastisement; verse 15 to the other, loving-kindness. In any case the thought expressed remains the same, the complete failure of Jehovah to win the affections of the people. **I**—Emphatic in the original: "Though it was I that taught. . . ." **They imagine**—R. V., "devise." **Mischief against me**—Not an accurate reproduction of the original. "With regard to me they think," or, even better, "they keep thinking evil." Verse 13 implies that the people had false conceptions of Jehovah; here the same complaint finds expression. No matter what Jehovah does, the people

to the most High: [x]they are like a deceitful bow: their princes shall fall by the sword for the [y]rage of their tongue: this *shall be* their derision [z]in the land of Egypt.

[x] Psa. 78. 57.—[y] Psa. 73. 9.

[z] Chap. 9. 3, 6.

fail to understand him, they continue to think evil of him. The strongest evidence of the truth of this accusation is their disregard for Jehovah while they appeal to Assyria and Egypt. **They return**—Better, *turn.* While not recognizing fully the hopelessness of their condition, they see enough to be persuaded that they need help; to secure it they turn hither and thither; where they finally decide to seek it is stated in verse 11. **Not to the most High**—R. V., "not to him that is on high," that is, Jehovah (verse 10; compare xi, 7). The Hebrew is obscure; a more literal rendering, *upward*, would express practically the same thought. LXX. and Peshitto apparently transpose two words and read "unto not"—that is, unto that which is not, namely, idols—which would be a good continuation of verse 15. Concerning Jehovah they think evil, therefore to the idols—the Baalim—they turn (compare especially chapter ii). *Unto not*, which is a peculiar expression, is thought by some to be an intentional substitution for "unto Baal" or "unto Baals" (see on ii, 16), which is considered original. **They are like a deceitful bow**—A bow which is expected to shoot in one direction but disappoints by sending the arrow in another, and thus fails to accomplish its purpose (Psa. lxxviii, 57). Israel has proved a painful disappointmentto Jehovah (compare Isa. v, 1–7). 16b is more closely connected with viii, 1–3.

IMMINENCE OF THE JUDGMENT IN THE FORM OF AN INVASION, vii, 16b–viii, 3.

Israel has proved a disappointment; defiantly it persists in rebellion, therefore judgment has become inevitable—indeed, it is rapidly approaching. Chapter vii, 16b–viii, 3, deals with the crisis that is imminent. The deep emotion of the prophet is indicated by the rapidity with which he moves from one thought to another. **Their princes shall fall**—All the eighth century prophets insist that the ruling classes are largely to blame for the prevalent corruption, therefore the first blow will fall upon them. **Rage of their tongue**—The word translated *rage* has received various translations and interpretations: *roughness, deception, boasting, mockery, skepticism, insolence, bitterness*, etc. The most satisfactory is probably "insolence," that is, toward Jehovah. "The root meaning is to make a grumbling sound, like an irritated camel." They have taken an insolent attitude toward Jehovah, hence he must vindicate himself by their overthrow. **This**—The overthrow of the princes. **Their derision in the land of Egypt**—Their false friends in the land of Egypt will laugh at them in scorn. Why the reference to Egypt? The eighth century prophets saw in Assyria the divinely commissioned executioner of judgment; *the sword*, therefore, should probably be understood as the sword of Assyria. During the same period the policy of Egypt was to incite, by promises of support, rebellion against Assyria among the nations throughout Syria and Palestine. The scheme was to keep the Assyrian armies busy, and thus prevent their advance against Egypt. Trusting in Egyptian promises, the nations frequently rebelled, but in the hour of need Egypt usually failed her allies; she looked on, laughing, while the nations suffered for their folly. This the prophet declares will happen now. It is quite possible that just at this time the Egyptian party in Israel was becoming prominent, favoring an alliance with Egypt and the throwing off of the obligations assumed by Menahem. New foreign

CHAPTER VIII.

SET [a]the trumpet to [1]thy mouth. *He shall come* [b]as an eagle against the house of the LORD, because [c]they have transgressed my covenant, and trespassed against my law. 2 [d]Israel shall cry unto me, My God, [e]we know thee. 3 Israel hath cast off *the thing that is* good: the enemy shall pursue him.

[a] Chap. 5. 8.——[1] Heb. *the roof of thy mouth.*——[b] Deut. 28. 49; Jer. 4. 13; Hab. 1. 8.

[c] Chap. 6. 7.——[d] Psa. 78. 34; chap. 5. 15.——[e] Titus 1. 16.

entanglements the prophet condemns; he announces the speedy advance of Assyria, describes the overthrow of the vacillating princes, and pictures the derision with which Egypt will watch the humiliation of Israel. There is not sufficient reason for regarding "this shall be their derision" as a gloss, and for connecting "in the land of Egypt" with the preceding, so as to read, "The insolence of their tongue in the land of Egypt"—that is, the insolence manifesting itself in the negotiations carried on with Egypt.

CHAPTER VIII.

After this general announcement the prophet proceeds to call attention to the imminence of the judgment (viii, 1), to describe the terror that will befall Israel (2), and to point out the futility of the appeal for deliverance (3). **Set the trumpet to thy mouth**—Literally, *to thy palate the horn. Palate* is equivalent to *mouth* (as in Job viii, 7; Prov. v, 3, etc.). On *horn* see on v, 8. The appeal is to the watchman to give the signal of alarm because the enemy is approaching (compare Amos iii, 6). The second exclamation is, literally, "As an eagle against the house of Jehovah." The thought is evidently that the enemy, on account of whose approach the signal is to be sounded, is coming with the swiftness of an eagle, or *vulture* (see on Mic. i, 16). Wellhausen suggests to read—without any change in the consonants apart from a different division—"for" or "because" an eagle (comes against the house of Jehovah), instead of "as" an eagle; thus bringing out the causal relation existing between the first and the second clauses. G. A. Smith adds the pertinent comment, "Where the carcass is, there are the eagles gathered together." As already suggested, the enemy is undoubtedly the Assyrian (compare Jer. xlix, 22; Ezek. xvii, 3). **House of Jehovah**—Not as commonly, the temple, but, as in ix, 15, the *land* of Israel. A similar expression, *house of Omri*, equivalent to *land of Omri*, is found in the Assyrian inscriptions. 1b sums up the accusations against Israel, thus supplying the reasons for the advance of the executioner. **Covenant**—Since it stands in parallelism with *law* it is probably equivalent to *ordinance* (Jer. xi, 6); these ordinances were based on the covenant established between Jehovah and Israel at Mount Sinai. **Law**—See on iv, 6. The impending doom will drive the people to Jehovah, temporarily at least; in their calamity they will cry unto Jehovah.

2. The reading of the R. V. is to be preferred, "They shall cry unto me, My God, we Israel know thee." Such attitude will be in great contrast to their former turning from Jehovah; but when no other help is near they will remind him that they belong to him, and this relationship they will urge as a reason why he should help them (compare Isa. xliii, 1). **My God**—Each individual cries; the singular passes into the plural, including the whole nation. Wellhausen, disregarding the accents and slightly altering the text, gets this translation, "To me they cry, My God! but I (Jehovah) know thee, O Israel." And knowing their true character he will permit justice to have her way. The time of mercy is past. 3. **Israel hath cast off the thing that** ["that which"] **is good**—Everything for which Jehovah stands; yea, Jehovah himself (compare Amos v, 4, 6, 14). **Cast off**—A strong word, *to cast off with loath-*

4 [f]They have set up kings, but not by me: they have made princes, and I knew *it* not: [g]of their silver and their gold have they made them idols, that they may be cut off.

[f] 2 Kings 15. 13, 17, 25; Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah.—[g] Chaps. 2. 8; 13. 2.

ing. Now they must suffer the consequences; the enemy will execute judgment. **The enemy shall pursue him**—May also be rendered, *let the enemy pursue him,* expressing the decision of Jehovah that the enemy is to be allowed to proceed unhindered.

ISRAEL'S POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS PRACTICES AN ABOMINATION TO JEHOVAH, viii, 4–14.

In verse 4 the prophet renews his attack upon Israel. The political revolutions are rebellion against Jehovah (4); their idolatry is an abomination to him (4–6); they must reap what they have sown (7); their appeals to foreign nations will not save them (8–10). Once more he condemns their religious practices, and the section closes with a threat of judgment (11–14).

4. **They have set up kings, but not by me**—Some understand this passage as a condemnation of the kingship in general; others, of the division of the kingdom after the death of Solomon, which led to the election of kings not of the dynasty of David; still others connect it with the chaotic condition subsequent to the death of Jeroboam II, when royal assassinations became quite common. The last interpretation is the most probable, for the prophet seems to be concerned with the present and immediate past rather than with events which occurred centuries before his time. As in chapter vii, the prophet condemns the present condition of politics. **Princes**—Nobles (iii, 4; vii, 3, etc.). It seems to have been customary in connection with the royal assassinations to make a clean sweep, to destroy the entire royal family and court. With the new king a new set of nobles came to the front. **Knew**—The divine knowledge is not abstract; it involves approval or disapproval, loving care or abandonment; here equivalent to *I did not approve* (compare Psa. i, 6; Job ix, 21).

As their political practices are an abomination to Jehovah so also their religious practices, culminating in idolatry. **They made them idols**—Though in verse 5 the "calf of Samaria" is specified—the bulls set up by Jeroboam I in Beth-el and Dan (1 Kings xii, 28, 29)—there can be no doubt that Hosea is condemning the idolatrous worship in general which was one result of the close contact between the Israelites and the Canaanites. Here for the first time in prophetic discourse we meet hostility to images. From the silence of the earlier prophets, Elijah, Elisha, and Amos, the inference has been drawn that they did not disapprove of them, and the further inference that the Decalogue, found in Exod. xx and Deut. v, with its prohibition of image worship, was not known at or before this time. It is doubtful, however, whether these inferences are warranted. Every crisis in Israel called forth a prophet. Every prophet arose to meet a particular crisis. The earlier prophets were raised up to meet certain crises, serious in their own day and generation, and to these they gave exclusive attention. Their silence on other matters proves only that, with more important affairs in hand, they thought it wise to leave others for their successors. The earlier prophets were concerned with having Jehovah recognized as the supreme God; others might portray his nature and character. The representation of Jehovah by images was not a denial of his supremacy, though it was due to a misapprehension of his spiritual nature; the emphasis of the latter might well wait until the former was more generally recognized. **That they may be cut off**—The Hebrew

5 Thy calf, O Samaria, hath cast *thee* off; mine anger is kindled against them: [h]how long *will it be* ere they attain to innocency? 6 For from Israel *was* it also: the workman made it; therefore it *is* not God: but the calf of Samaria shall be broken in pieces. 7 For [i]they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind: it hath no [2]stalk: the bud shall yield no meal: if so be it yield, [k]the strangers

[h] Jer. 13. 27.—[i] Prov. 22. 8; chap. 10. 12, 13.

[2] Or, *standing corn.*—[k] Chap. 7. 9.

verb is in the singular; LXX. reads the plural, which may be original. Some interpret these words as referring to the people. Since Israel did know, or at least could have known, better, their idolatrous practices were evidence that they were determined upon their own destruction. It seems better, however, to understand the words as referring to the idols; they make them only to be destroyed again. 5. **Thy calf, O Samaria, hath cast thee off**—R. V., "He hath cast off thy calf, O Samaria." The latter is a more accurate reproduction of the Hebrew, and gives better sense; but when taken with the context a difficulty remains; for the context suggests that Jehovah is the speaker, so that we would expect "*I* have cast off." The addition of one single consonant to the verb form, with corresponding vowel changes, produces this reading. The emendation becomes unnecessary if the verb is given an intransitive meaning: "Abominable is thy calf." *Calf* is a contemptuous designation of the bulls set up in Dan and Beth-el, and perhaps in Samaria, though the expression used here does not necessarily imply the presence of such *calf* in the capital, Samaria; the name of the capital may be used instead of the name of the country, Israel. Throughout the entire section the sentences follow one another in rapid succession without indication of the logical connection. The righteous anger of Jehovah is aroused, therefore he must make an end of the *calf*. **How long will it be ere they attain to innocency?**—An exclamation prompted by disappointment and sympathy. The exact force of the words "they attain to innocency" is disputed. The literal translation, "how long will they be incapable of innocency," seems to come nearer to the real thought. The persistent idolatry reveals their incapacity for something better. Is this condition to continue forever? 6. **From Israel was it also** ["is even this"]—What? Evidently the calf of verse 5. In its establishment Jehovah had no part; it is the work of Israel; therefore the former has cast it off. To join this clause more closely with 5a, 5b is transposed by some so as to stand before verse 5, and 5c is explained as a later gloss. Since the idol is made by human hands it can be **no God** (R. V.)—These words imply that the people identify the image with the deity. To show its impotence it will be broken to pieces.

Under the figures of sowing, growing, and reaping (compare x, 12, 13) the prophet pictures once more, in verse 7, the destruction of Israel. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. vi, 7). **Wind**—A picture of vain, unprofitable conduct. The harvest will be **whirlwind**—Not only will they derive no benefit from their conduct, it will result in actual destruction. Of the sentences following G. A. Smith says, "Indeed, like a storm Hosea's own language now sweeps along, and his metaphors are torn in shreds upon it." **It hath no stalk**—R. V., "he hath no standing grain." The figure differs slightly from the preceding. Israel is pictured as sowing corn, but it withers before the stalk develops. A. V. is to be preferred. **The bud** ["blade"] **shall yield no meal**—Even if the stalk forms it will yield no grain from which meal might be made. Should it bring forth grain Israel will not be benefited, for

shall swallow it up. 8 [1]Israel is swallowed up: now shall they be among the Gentiles [m]as a vessel wherein *is* no pleasure. 9 For [n]they

[1] 2 Kings 17. 6.——[m] Jer. 22. 28; 48. 38. ——[n] 2 Kings 15. 19.

strangers shall seize it. Nothing but disappointment and ruin is ahead of the nation.

In verses 8–11 the prophet, in a sense, corrects himself. In verse 7 he has said that the destruction is sure to come, but as he looks upon the nation he sees that ruin is already present, and he cries out in agony, **Israel is swallowed up**—Foreigners have already begun to devour the nation (vii, 8, 9); complete destruction is only a question of time. **Now shall they be**—Better, R. V., "now are they"; the prophet is describing a present situation. **A vessel wherein is no pleasure** ["none delighteth"]—A worthless vessel. Its resources have been sapped (vii, 9) by greedy nations; now it is cast aside like a vessel for which there is no further use (Jer. xxii, 28; xlviii, 38). In illustrating this phrase Thomson speaks of the readiness with which pottery is cast away in the East: "The coarse pottery of the country is so cheap that even poor people cast it away in contempt, or dash it to pieces on the slightest occasion."

What has caused this condition of affairs? Their own stubbornness. 9. They were determined to mingle among the nations, and these proved their destruction. Of the nations one is singled out. **Gone up to Assyria**—For assistance (vii, 11). **A wild ass alone by himself**—To be taken with the preceding words; it is a description of Israel's foreign policy. The point of comparison is obstinacy (Gen. xvi, 12; Job xxxix, 5–8). Wild asses ordinarily move in droves, but sometimes a single animal, resisting the gregarious instinct, will run away and thus expose itself to danger. Israel has been warned again and again, but resisting all warnings is determined to have its own way, are gone up to Assyria, [o]a wild ass alone by himself: Ephraim [p]hath hired [3]lovers. 10 Yea, though they have hired among the nations, now

[o] Jer. 2. 24.——[p] Isa. 30. 6; Ezek. 16. 33, 34.——[3] Heb. *loves*.

whatever the consequences. **Ephraim hath hired lovers**—Literally, *loves*. In the Hebrew there is a play upon words, the original for *wild ass* and for *Ephraim* being similar in sound. The reference is apparently to the gifts sent by Ephraim (Israel) to secure the friendship of Assyria or Egypt (vii, 11; xii, 1). LXX. has a different reading, but it is no improvement over the Hebrew. Various emendations have been proposed; for example, "Ephraim gives love gifts," which requires but a very slight alteration. To restore the parallelism, as in vii, 11, and xii, 1, some read "Egypt" in the place of "Ephraim": "To Egypt they give love-gifts." The thought is not altered by these emendations.

Of verse 10 it has been said, "No single word of this entire verse is of certain meaning." As a result translations have been many and emendations not a few. The most recent commentators, Marti and Harper, relieve the situation by rejecting the verse as a later gloss, but for this there are no adequate reasons. For 10a, unless the text is changed, the interpretation suggested by the English versions, especially R. V., "though they hire among the nations," seems the most satisfactory. Though they may succeed to some extent in gaining the support of the nations, Jehovah cannot permit the present policy to continue, for its continuation would frustrate completely the purpose of Jehovah for Israel. **Now will I gather them**—Israel, not the nations. Israel is to be gathered in like a flock, which is put in the fold to prevent the wandering of the sheep. They are to be put under restraint, their reckless negotiations are to be interrupted. Thus Jehovah may yet be able to teach Israel his ways. What

[q]will I gather them, and they shall [4]sorrow [5]a little for the burden of [r]the king of princes. **11** Because Ephraim hath made [s]many altars to sin, altars shall be unto him to sin. **12** I have written to him [t]the

[q] Ezek. 16. 37; chap. 10. 10.—[4] Or, *begin*.—[5] Or, *in a little while*, as Hag. 2. 6.

[r] Isa. 10. 8; Ezek. 26. 7; Dan. 2. 37.—[s] Chap. 12. 11.—[t] Deut. 4. 6, 8; Psa. 119. 18; 147. 19, 20.

the method of restraint will be is not stated, but the next sentence indicates that the prophet has in mind an exile. 10b is even more difficult. **And they shall sorrow a little for the burden of the king of princes**—R. V., "and they begin to be diminished by reason of the burden of the king of princes." Margin, R. V., goes back to A. V. With either translation the sense seems to be that Israel, when under restraint, will suffer from the burdens imposed by the king of princes—the king of Assyria (compare Isa. x, 8). In the inscriptions the Assyrian kings frequently call themselves "king of kings." The translations do not agree as to the derivation of the verb; A. V. derives it from a verb *to sorrow, to be sick, to suffer pain*, while R. V. traces it to a verb *begin*, to which Von Orelli gives the additional meaning, *release, relieve*. As the form is written in the great majority of the Hebrew manuscripts the translation of R. V. is to be preferred. The policy of oppression practiced by the conquerors will diminish the prosperity and numbers of Israel. Why "begin"? A smoother reading, requiring but few changes in the original, is afforded by LXX.: "and they shall cease for a little while from the anointing of a king and of princes." While the exile lasts they will be compelled to be without their own rulers (iii, 4; compare xiii, 10). This threat is exceedingly appropriate here, and it is quite probable that LXX. has preserved the original text. What contrast to the ease with which they now place kings upon the throne! (viii, 4.)

Verse 11 introduces the justification for the threat of judgment, which is repeated in 13b. The substitution of a cold, formal ceremonial for obedience to the divine requirements is responsible for the downfall. The present text is made somewhat cumbersome by the presence of the first "for sinning," or "to sin." To remove the difficulty some read in its place "to make atonement," which requires but a slight change in the vocalization of the verb form. Ephraim made the altars for purposes of atonement, but their purposes have become perverted. This is an improvement, but it is more likely that the first "for sinning" has come into the text through the carelessness of a copyist, whose eyes lighted accidentally upon the end of the second part of the verse, and that it should be omitted. With this omission the verse may be translated, "For though Ephraim made many altars, they have become to him altars for sinning." The common notion was that the offering of sacrifice was sufficient to win the divine favor; the more numerous the altars the greater the divine pleasure. This false notion the prophet attacks (Isa. i, 11ff.; Amos v, 21ff.); the altars have only increased Israel's guilt. How? Chapter iv, 12ff., supplies the answer.

Verse 12 also is full of difficulties. The translation itself is uncertain. R. V. differs from A. V. only in reading "the ten thousand things" instead of "the great things"; the latter is in accord with the Masoretic suggestion, the former follows the Hebrew text; in this R. V. is preferable. For "my law" LXX. and Vulgate read "my laws," which is probably original. To get this reading no change in the consonantal text is required. The translation of the tenses also is uncertain; LXX. and Vulgate have the future, Targum and Peshitto the past. The first verb in Hebrew is an *imperfect*, which expresses a variety of ideas but always implies incompleteness.

great things of my law, *but* they were counted as a strange thing. 13 [u] [6]They sacrifice flesh *for* the sacrifices of mine offerings, and eat *it*; [x]*but* the LORD accepteth them not; [y]now will he remember their iniquity, and visit their sins: [z]they shall return to Egypt. 14 [a]For Israel hath forgotten [b]his Maker, and [c]buildeth temples; and Judah hath

[u] Jer. 7. 21; Zech. 7. 6.—[6] Or, *In the sacrifices of mine offerings they*, etc.—[x] Jer. 14. 10, 12; chaps. 5. 6; 9. 4; Amos 5. 22.

[y] Chap. 9. 9; Amos 8. 7.—[z] Deut. 28. 68; chaps. 9. 3, 6; 11. 5.—[a] Deut. 32. 18.—[b] Isa. 29. 23; Eph. 2. 10.—[c] 1Kings 12. 31.

Here the verb might be rendered, (1) "I did write" (and am writing still); (2) "I will write"; (3) "I am writing," or "I am wont to write"; (4) "I did write repeatedly"; (5) it might be hypothetical, "Were I to write," or (6) concessive, "Though I wrote," or "Though I should write." Which of these is the proper translation? Naturally, commentators disagree. To the present writer the choice seems to lie between (5) and (6), and of these (6) seems the more probable; and of the two possible renderings the former seems more in accord with the context. If this translation is accepted the whole verse will read: "Though I wrote for him the ten thousand of my laws, they were counted as strange things," or "as those of a stranger." The misconduct of Israel is not due to ignorance; Jehovah gave instruction continuously, but his laws were considered as something foreign, and therefore of no authority. *Ten thousand* or *myriads* is not to be understood literally; it simply means a great number. On *law* see comment on iv, 6. The passage certainly implies the existence of written laws, but it does not prove the existence of the entire Pentateuchal legislation. On the contrary, the context seems to indicate that the laws did not deal to any great extent with the ceremonial or with sacrifice; of these Hosea speaks very lightly. He seems to emphasize rather the moral and civil legislation, such as is found, for example, in Exod. xxi–xxiii.

In verse 13 the prophet returns to the religious practices. **They sacrifice flesh for the sacrifices of mine offerings, and eat it**—R. V., "As for the sacrifices of mine offerings, they sacrifice flesh and eat it." The latter follows the Hebrew text more closely. The word translated "mine offerings" occurs only here; its meaning is not quite certain, though it comes probably from a root *to give*. *Sacrifices of mine offerings* is ordinarily interpreted as equivalent to *my sacrificial offerings*, and, unless we assume a corruption of the text, this is the best interpretation. These sacrifices, consisting of flesh, are offered, but Jehovah does not care for them, since the right disposition is wanting and the givers neglect the weightier matters. Therefore "the only positive result is that the sacrificer has the luxury of a dinner of fresh meat" (compare iv, 8). The whole is a condemnation of the heartless religious practices. The measure is full. The blood of the sacrificial animals cannot blot out their sins; he will remember them and will proceed to execute the judgment, which will take the form of an exile. **They shall return to Egypt**—The house of their former bondage. The mention of Egypt could not but suggest the sufferings of the early Israelites, but it is hardly correct to regard Egypt here as "merely a type of the land of bondage" (Keil), and thus to interpret the reference as a "poetic expression for captivity in general." The prophet undoubtedly intended the words to be understood as predicting an exile in Egypt (compare ix, 3, 6; xi, 5). The Israelites appealed, now to Assyria, now to Egypt; these very nations will prove the ruin of Israel (compare Isa. vii, 18; xi, 11, etc.).

Verse 14 sums up the cause of it all. **Israel hath forgotten his Maker**—This is the root of all evil (see on ii, 20), but especially of the false policy which

multiplied fenced cities: but [d]I will send a fire upon his cities, and it shall devour the palaces thereof.

[d] Jer. 17. 27; Amos 2. 5.

could see help only in human defenses, and which led them to seek help among the surrounding nations and build **temples**—Better, with R. V., "palaces," or "castles," in parallelism with **fenced** ["fortified"] **cities**—The building of palaces and fortified cities, as such, is not condemned by the prophet. What he does condemn is the fact that in these, and these alone, the people put their trust, to the absolute disregard of Jehovah. The latter will vindicate himself by utterly destroying the human defenses. **Fire**—War (as in Amos i, 4–ii, 5). 14b seems to be dependent upon Amos (i, 4, 7, etc.), who prophesied about twenty years earlier. Hosea might, therefore, have been acquainted with the words of the earlier prophet. Most modern commentators consider verse 14 an addition. The reasons for this opinion are summed up by Harper: (1) The reference to Judah is not called for; (2) the style resembles that of Amos rather than that of Hosea; (3) the natural conclusion of the discourse is in verse 13, hence verse 14 only weakens the climax; (4) the thought of Jehovah as Israel's Creator is unexpected in Hosea's time; (5) the verse is superfluous in the strophic system. Whether or not these reasons are conclusive against Hosea's authorship of verse 14 each one must decide for himself.

CHAPTER IX.

The Present Rejoicing of Israel Contrasted with the Despair of the Exile, 1–9.

Chapter ix, 1, marks a new beginning. The prophet beholds the rejoicing of the people at harvest time, perhaps at a joyous religious festival. Rejoicing at such a time is perfectly natural, but, judging from chapter ii,

CHAPTER IX.

REJOICE not, O Israel, for joy, as *other* people: for thou [a]hast

[a] Chaps. 4. 12; 5. 4, 7.

much of the celebration, though nominally in recognition of Jehovah's goodness, was in reality in honor of the Baalim. This the prophet cannot endure. He warns the people not to be too exuberant (1), for the occasions of rejoicing will soon cease. On account of their apostasy Jehovah will withdraw his blessings (2); yea, they will be carried into exile (3), where, upon an unclean land, joyful religious feasts can be celebrated no longer (4, 5); their own land will become a wilderness (6). After announcing the impending doom the prophet points out once more the moral and spiritual apostasy responsible for the judgment (7–9).

1. **Rejoice not**—The occasion of the exhortation is probably the noisy celebration of a harvest festival. Harvest time has always been a season of rejoicing (Isa. ix, 3); for, on the one hand, a rich harvest insures prosperity, on the other, it is a sign of the divine favor, for which people desired to express their appreciation and gratitude. Why does the prophet oppose the celebration? (1) Because it is like the celebrations of **other people**—That is, of the surrounding nations; literally, *the peoples*, which, Wellhausen suggests, is here used for the first time in prophetic language in the sense of *heathen*. Among "the nations" these celebrations were noisy and wild, accompanied by all manner of excesses; but this revelry was out of harmony with the prophet's lofty and spiritual conception of the religion of Jehovah. (2) 1b makes it plain that, though nominally the festival may have been held in the name of Jehovah (verse 4), the chief credit for the blessings of harvest was given to the Baalim (compare ii, 5–8); to this also the Jehovah prophet must take exception. **For joy**—Literally, *unto rejoicing*—too loudly. LXX.

gone a whoring from thy God, thou hast loved a [b]reward [1]upon every cornfloor. 2 [c]The floor and the [2]winepress shall not feed them, and

[b] Jer. 44. 17; chap. 2. 12.——[1] Or, *in*, etc.——[c] Chap. 2. 9, 12.——[2] Or, *winefat*.

reads "exult not," which would restore the parallelism.

1b is to be connected with verse 2, setting forth the cause of the judgment. The connection may be expressed, "Because thou hast gone a whoring from thy God, (because) thou hast loved a reward upon every cornfloor, (therefore) the (threshing) floor . . . shall not feed them." **Gone a whoring** ["played the harlot"] **from thy God**—In a spiritual sense (see on ii, 2–5). **Loved a reward** ["hire"]—Literally, *harlot's hire* (ii, 12). **Upon every cornfloor**—There are stored the blessings of harvest, which are received as gifts from the Baalim. To recognize them as such would oblige the Israelites to worship these Canaanitish deities, but to worship these would imply faithlessness to Jehovah; and anything received from the Baalim which might induce the Israelites to play spiritual harlot to Jehovah could be called harlot's hire. This they were fond of, else they would not have been so enthusiastic in their worship. 2. Faithlessness to Jehovah will be punished by a withdrawal of the divine gifts (ii, 9). **Wine press**—The Hebrew word denotes not the press in which the grapes are pressed out, but the receptacle into which flows the juice after the grapes are crushed (see on Joel ii, 24). *Threshing floor*—where the grain is stored as well as threshed out—and *winepress* stand for grain and wine. **New wine**—See on iv, 11. **Feed them**—LXX., with a change of one consonant, "know them." **Fail in her**—Better R. V., "fail her," that is, Israel. The change to a feminine pronoun would have to be explained by the representation of Israel as a harlot (iv, 19). It should be noted, however, that all the versions read the plural, as in the first

the new wine shall fail in her. 3 They shall not dwell in [d]the LORD'S land; [e]but Ephraim shall return to Egypt, and [f]they shall eat unclean

[d] Lev. 25. 23; Jer. 2. 7; 16. 18.——[e] Chaps. 8. 13; 11. 5.——[f] Ezek. 4. 13; Dan. 1. 8.

clause. Changes from the second person (verse 1) to the third person (verse 2) are not uncommon in prophetic discourse. For the thought compare Amos v, 11; Isa. v, 10.

The manner in which Jehovah will execute the judgment is indicated in verse 3. Israel is to be removed from the land. **Egypt**—See on viii, 13. The other power upon which Israel relies for help, Assyria (vii, 11; viii, 9), will also be a means of Israel's destruction. **Jehovah's land**—The land in which Israel now dwells. So long as primitive religious conceptions prevailed in Israel Palestine was thought to be the land of Jehovah in much the same sense in which Moab was the land of Chemosh or Ammon the land of Milcom (Judg. xi, 23, 24). Outside of Israel Jehovah was powerful only as he went to the assistance of his people Israel against another people and its deity. Even to David exile from the land meant inability to worship Jehovah (1 Sam. xxvi, 19; compare Jonah i, 3). The eighth century prophets had a broader conception of Jehovah; he controlled other nations as well as Israel (Amos i, 3–ii, 3; ix, 7), though they never ceased to believe that Jehovah had a peculiar interest in the Hebrews. Nevertheless, in several places passages are found which imply that the common people continued to cling to the narrower view. Thus may be explained the latter part of this verse. **Unclean things** ["food"]—Not food which was *per se* ceremonially unclean, but food which was unclean because the land in which it was eaten was unclean (Amos vii, 17; Ezek. iv, 13); and the land was unclean because Jehovah could not properly be worshiped there (compare 2 Kings v, 17).

To a people so scrupulous about the

things [g]in Assyria. 4 [h]They shall not offer wine *offerings* to the LORD, [i]neither shall they be pleasing unto him: [k]their sacrifices *shall be* unto them as the bread of mourners; all that eat thereof shall be polluted: for their bread [l]for their soul shall not come into the house of the LORD. 5 What will ye do in [m]the solemn day, and in the day of the feast of the LORD? 6 For, lo, they are gone because of [3]destruction: [n]Egypt shall

[g] 2 Kings 17. 6; chap. 11. 11.—[h] Chap. 3. 4.—[i] Jer. 6. 20; chap. 8. 13.

[k] Deut. 26. 14.—[l] Lev. 17. 11.—[m] Chap. 2. 11.—[3] Heb. *spoil*—[n] Verse 3; chap. 7. 16.

fulfillment of the ceremonial requirements one of the greatest calamities of life in exile would be the inability to continue properly the external forms of worship. This calamity the prophet brings before them in vivid colors in verse 4. Whether the prophet himself shared the common notion, or whether he simply used these expressions because they would present the climax of calamity to the minds of those whom he was anxious to influence, is not made clear; that Hosea conceived of the sway of Jehovah as extending over nations outside of Israel cannot be doubted. **Offer ["pour out"] wine offerings to Jehovah**—Drink offerings will cease (see on Joel i, 9). **Neither shall they** (the wine offerings) **be pleasing unto him**—Margin of R. V., which connects the words differently, reproduces more accurately the Hebrew, "neither shall their sacrifices be pleasing unto him." This presupposes the bringing of sacrifice, only it will not be acceptable to Jehovah. But the first as well as the last clause of the verse states that certain offerings shall be discontinued. The same is implied in the whole verse; iii, 4, also teaches that sacrifice is to be entirely discontinued in exile. To remove this apparent contradiction scholars generally accept the emendation first suggested by Kuenen, and read, with a change of one single consonant, "neither shall they prepare for him their sacrifices." **Their sacrifices shall be unto them as the bread of mourners**—That is, unclean. *The bread of mourning* is the bread eaten during the seven days of mourning (Deut. xxvi, 14) and at funeral meals. Everyone coming near a dead person is unclean for seven days (Num. xix, 14), and everything such an unclean person touches, even his food, becomes unclean (Num. xix, 22); anyone eating this unclean food shares the uncleanness. **Their bread for their soul**—The last word means also *appetite*, so R. V., "shall be for their appetite"; sometimes it is even used in the place of the pronoun—"for themselves." Whichever rendering is adopted the thought remains the same. Part of the bread (or food) was presented to Jehovah in the form of first fruits, offerings, or tithes, and thus it assisted in securing the divine favor; a part was used to satisfy the hunger of the owner. In the exile there will be no sanctuary, and offerings cannot be brought; the food cannot be used to secure or maintain the divine favor; it serves only to satisfy physical hunger. **House of Jehovah**—Any sanctuary consecrated to Jehovah.

5. In exile what can Israel do **in the solemn day**—The religious festivals held on sacred days, such as the sabbath and new moon. In an unclean land these celebrations become impossible. LXX. reads "days," which may be original. **Day of the feast of Jehovah**—*Feast* and *solemn assembly* are not synonyms; the former is literally *pilgrimage*, and is used of the three annual pilgrimages (Exod. xxiii, 14–17); of these it is applied in particular to the harvest festival (1 Kings viii, 2; xii, 32; Ezek. xlv, 25; see on Zech. xiv, 19). When the pilgrimage season comes around, whither will they go?

6. Already the prophet sees the people leaving the land of Jehovah to experience the deprivations of the exile pictured in verses 4, 5. **They are gone**—The *prophetic* perfect in Hebrew. **Because of destruction**—If the

gather them up, Memphis shall bury them: [4] [5]the pleasant *places* for their silver, [o]nettles shall possess them: thorns *shall be* in their tabernacles.

[4] Or, *their silver shall be desired, the nettle*, etc.——[5] Heb. *the desire.*

7 The days of visitation are come, the days of recompense are come; Israel shall know *it*: the prophet *is* a fool, [p]the [6]spiritual man *is* mad,

[o] Isa. 5. 6; 32. 13; 34. 13; chap. 10. 8. ——[p] Ezek. 13. 3, etc.; Mic. 2. 11; Zeph. 3. 4.——[6] Heb. *man of the spirit.*

text is correct, better, with the R. V., "away from destruction"—away from the destruction of their native land. Some alter the text so as to read "to Assyria," chiefly because Hosea frequently joins Egypt and Assyria. **Shall gather them up**—In exile (viii, 10); in connection with "bury" the thought seems to be of gathering for burial (Jer. viii, 2; xxv, 33). **Memphis shall bury**—Memphis was the old capital of Lower Egypt, and throughout the entire history of Egypt it remained a city of great prominence. It is located on the Nile a short distance south of Cairo. Here, as a representative city of the kingdom, it is synonymous with Egypt. The figure is taken from the numerous and extensive burial grounds in Egypt, many of which recent excavations have brought to light. One of the largest of these was uncovered at Memphis, stretching twenty miles from north to south. As the dead are gathered in these burial fields never to rise again, so Israel will be swallowed up in Egypt. Meanwhile their own land will become a wilderness, covered with nettles and thorns. **Pleasant places for their silver**—The treasure houses; but R. V., "pleasant things of silver"—their valuable possessions made of silver. The expression cannot be limited to idols. From the parallel clause it seems that the reference is to houses decorated and filled with silver. **Nettles shall possess**—They will grow over them; and thorns shall cover their **tabernacles**—Dwellings.

In verses 7–9 the text is in such confusion that the exact meaning of some parts cannot be determined. The first part of verse 7 evidently connects with verse 6. **Are come**—To express his assurance that the days of visitation, that is, of judgment and recompense for wrongdoing (described in 2–6), will certainly come the prophet uses the *prophetic* perfect, equivalent to *shall surely come.* **Israel shall know it**—Find out by experience (compare Isa. ix, 9). Shall know what? Some answer, that "the prophet is a fool, . . . is mad." In other words, the people will discover that they have been deceived by the prophets who have promised continued peace and prosperity (Mic. ii, 11; iii, 5). This interpretation makes the *prophet* and the *spiritual man*, or *man that hath the spirit*, the *false* prophet. If this is the correct interpretation the words "Israel shall . . . mad" must be regarded as a parenthetical sentence, since the latter part of the verse, "for the abundance of thine iniquity," must be connected with the announcement of judgment in the first part. But would a *true* prophet call a *false* prophet a *spiritual man?* This is at least doubtful (Ezek. xiii, 3); the expression is certainly more applicable to a *true* prophet. If so here, the above interpretation cannot be correct. A second interpretation connects "Israel shall know it" with the preceding; Israel shall know the terrors of the judgment. With "the prophet" begins a new sentence, which continues to the end of the verse. According to this view, Hosea says that the true prophet has become a fool and madman; that is, he has become beside himself at the sight of the awful condition and the thought of the impending doom of the people. The awfulness of the expected calamity was indeed sufficient to drive mad a man with the sensitive nature of an Hosea. A third interpretation sees in the words "the prophet . . . mad" a defiant reply of the people. They

for the multitude of thine iniquity, and the great hatred. 8 The [q]watchman of Ephraim *was* with my God: *but* the prophet *is* a snare of a fowler

[q] Jer. 6. 17; 31. 6; Ezek. 3. 17; 33. 7.

meet the exhortations of the prophet with a contemptuous sneer that he is a fool and a madman (2 Kings ix, 11; compare Acts ii, 13). These words the prophet takes up and says, The prophet has indeed gone mad, but it is your sin and his yearning sympathy for you which has made him so. It may be difficult to say which of these is the right interpretation; on the whole, the last seems preferable. **The great hatred**—R. V., "the enmity is great"; that is, the enmity manifested against the prophet (explained further in verse 8) helps to drive him mad. Some change the text and read "greatness of thy sin," so as to bring it in accord with the parallel clause.

Verse 8 also presents serious difficulties. **The watchman of Ephraim was with my God**—R. V., "Ephraim was a watchman with my God." Most commentators seem to prefer the construction adopted by the Revisers, but all recognize the difficulties of the clause. As a result there have been many translations and interpretations, and not a few emendations. Delitzsch, understanding *watchman* in a bad sense, interprets, "The God who speaks by the prophet has in Ephraim a malignant spy instead of a humble observer"; for this reason the prophet is persecuted. More commonly, however, the word is used in a good sense, *a watchman appointed by Jehovah* (Jer. vi, 17; Ezek. iii, 17; Hab. ii, 1, etc.). Therefore Keil and others interpret, "Ephraim (Israel) looks out for the prophecies or divine revelations with the God of the prophets, that is, at the side of Jehovah; in other words, it does not trust or follow its own prophets, who are not inspired by Jehovah." These interpreters regard the prophets mentioned in the latter part of the verse as false prophets, who are to the people a snare of the fowler in all its ways; that is, everywhere they attempt to ensnare the people; even in the house of Jehovah they manifest their evil intentions (compare Amos vii, 10–17). These are two representative interpretations of the text as it stands; of these that of Delitzsch is preferable, for after condemning so persistently the attitude of Ephraim toward Jehovah it is not probable that Hosea would describe Ephraim as a watchman waiting longingly for divine revelations. But, even admitting that the Hebrew may possibly yield the thought suggested by Delitzsch, the expression is peculiar and un-Hebraic; and it is this feeling that accounts for the many emendations proposed. Of these the most simple is that of Cheyne, which requires only the addition of one letter (מ), which, he assumes, has fallen out accidentally at the beginning of one word because the preceding word ends with the same consonant. In addition, he connects the first clause with the second and reads the entire verse, "The watchman of Ephraim (so A. V.), appointed by my God (literally, *from my God*), even the prophet—a fowler's snare is in all his ways, and enmity in the house of his God." This gives a very satisfactory sense. **Watchman of Ephraim**—The prophet (compare Jer. vi, 17). **Snare of a fowler**—Spread by the Israelites who seek to destroy the prophet. **The house of his God**—Either the sanctuary of Jehovah (Amos vii, 10–17), or *house* may be used, as in viii, 1; ix, 15, in the sense of *land*. Nowhere in the land is the prophet safe. All other emendations require more radical changes in the text. Nowack, by means of omissions, transpositions, and other changes, gets, "Hostility to the watchman is found in the house of his God; the

in all his ways, *and* hatred [7]in the house of his God. **9** [r]They have deeply corrupted *themselves*, as in the days of [s]Gibeah: [t]*therefore* he will remember their iniquity, he will visit their sins. **10** I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers as [u]the firstripe in the fig tree [x]at her first time: *but* they went to [y]Baal-peor, and [z]separated themselves [a]unto *that* shame; [b]and *their* abominations were according as they loved. **11** *As for* Ephraim, their glory shall fly away like a bird,

[7] Or, *against*.—[r] Isa. 31. 6; chap. 10. 9.—[s] Judg. 19. 22.—[t] Chap. 8. 13.—[u] Isa. 28. 4; Mic. 7. 1.—[x] See chap. 2. 15.

[y] Num. 25. 3; Psa. 106. 28.—[z] Chap. 4. 14.—[a] Jer. 11. 13; see Judg. 6. 32.—[b] Psa. 81. 12; Ezek. 20. 8; Amos 4. 5.

prophet finds fowler's snares in all his ways." Harper, taking "enmity" over from verse 7, connecting the latter part of verse 8 with 9a, and changing the latter, reads, "Enmity exists toward Ephraim's watchman; the prophet (finds) the snares of the fowler in all his ways; in the (very) house of God they dig for him a deep pit."

Verse 9, as it now stands, forms a suitable conclusion. They have gone to the lowest depths of corruption. **As in the days of Gibeah**—Hosea refers again to this crime in x, 9 (compare Judg. xix, 22–30; xx, 46–48). That deed of shame was severely punished. Would Israel escape? Surely not. He will **remember . . . visit**—See on vii, 2; viii, 13.

ISRAEL, APOSTATE AND REBELLIOUS FROM TIME IMMEMORIAL, IS DOOMED TO DESTRUCTION, 10–17.

Three times in chapters ix–xi (ix, 10; x, 9; xi, 1) Hosea reverts to the early history of Israel to show how loving had been the divine care and how persistent Israel's apostasy and rebellion. In the beginning Israel appeared to Jehovah like a desirable fruit; but ere long contact with the Canaanitish religion caused contamination and Israel became an abomination in the sight of Jehovah (10). In consequence, awful judgments will come (11–17). The form which the punishment will take is not quite clear, as the description is highly poetic. For the greater part Jehovah himself speaks; in 14 and 17 the prophet appears as speaker.

10. **Like grapes in the wilderness**—As grapes unexpectedly discovered in the desert delight the heart of the weary traveler, so Israel, in the beginning, delighted the heart of Jehovah (compare ii, 15; Jer. ii, 3). *In the wilderness* is to be connected with *like grapes*, not with *Israel*, though there may be an allusion to Israel's abode in the desert (Deut. xxxii, 10). **As the first-ripe in the fig tree at her first time**—R. V., "at its first season," that is, when figs first begin to ripen. The appearance of the early figs is greeted with much joy, especially since they are regarded as of an extra fine quality. With similar joy Jehovah looked upon Israel; but erelong it proved a disappointment to him. **Baal-peor**—Equivalent to *Beth-peor*, or *Peor* (Deut. iii, 29; Num. xxiii, 28), where the Baal of Peor was worshiped (Num. xxv, 3; see on Hos. ii, 5); there the apostasy of Israel had its beginning. **Separated**—Or, R. V., "consecrated." **Shame** ["shameful thing"]—Heb. *bōsheth*—Baal. Probably *shame* was substituted for *Baal* (see on ii, 16, and references there). **And their abominations were according as they loved**—Better, R. V., "and (they) became abominable (literally, abominations), like that which they loved." The noun is used in the place of the adjective for the sake of emphasis (G.-K., 141c)—they became abomination incarnate. Worshipers inevitably grow into the image of the being they worship; thus the Israelites partook of the corrupt character of the Baal of Peor.

While the prophet does not say so, he certainly implies that the present conduct of Israel is equally abominable, for in verse 11 he proceeds to announce judgment. **Glory**—Not only

from the birth, and from the womb, and from the conception. **12** [c]Though they bring up their children, yet [d]will I bereave them, *that there shall* not *be* a man *left*: yea, [e]woe also to them when I [f]depart from them! **13** Ephraim, [g]as I saw Tyrus, *is* planted in a pleasant place:

[c] Job 27. 14.—[d] Deut. 28. 41, 62.—[e] Deut. 31. 17; 2 Kings 17. 18; chap. 5. 6.—[f] See 1 Sam. 28. 15, 16.—[g] See Ezek. 26; 27; 28.

children, but all the elements which combine to make a nation glorious—wealth, prosperity, great numbers, etc. All these will vanish as swiftly as birds fly. The greatest curse will be the withholding of offspring (compare Psa. cxxvii, cxxviii). The three threats are arranged in the form of a climax, which is expressed more clearly in R. V., "There shall be no birth, and none with child, and no conception." Women will not conceive; if by accident they do, the offspring will perish in the womb; if perchance it retains life it will die at birth. The judgment is one suited to sins against chastity (compare iv, 11ff.). 12. The children already born will not escape. **Though**—More accurately, *Yea, though.* **Bereave**—Or, *make childless* (1 Sam. xv, 33). **Not be a man left** ["not a man shall be left"]—Children will not reach the age of manhood. **To them**—Is interpreted most naturally as referring to the parents; they also will suffer. **When I depart from them**—There is no need for changing the text so as to read, "I look away" (compare v, 6, 15).

Verse 13 presents grave linguistic difficulties. The thought which the English translators seek to express seems to be: At present Israel is flourishing like Tyre, but soon it will become desolate, for it must bring out its children to the slayer. Would the prophet express this thought in as awkward Hebrew as the verse now contains? LXX. reads a different, and in some respects a better text, and by its aid we may reconstruct the Hebrew so as to read, "Ephraim, according as I see, for prey has appointed [h]but Ephraim shall bring forth his children to the murderer. **14** Give them, O LORD: what wilt thou give? them [i]a [g]miscarrying womb and dry breasts. **15** All their wickedness [k]*is* in Gilgal: for there I hated them: [l]for the wickedness of their doings I will drive them out of mine house,

[h] Verse 16; chap. 13. 16.—[i] Luke 23. 29.—[g] Heb. *that casteth the fruit.*—[k] Chaps. 4. 15; 12. 11.—[l] Chaps. 1. 6.

his children; Ephraim—he must lead out his children to slaughter." The reading becomes still smoother if *according as I see* is omitted. With these alterations verse 13 becomes an expansion of verses 11, 12, setting forth the destruction of Ephraim's youth in war.

14. The judgment is richly deserved. The prophet understands, with all his love for the people, that mercy has become impossible; in holy indignation he prays Jehovah to execute his judgment. The abruptness of the style indicates the deep emotion of the prophet. **What wilt thou give**—A rhetorical question. The prophet meditates what he should ask for. Shall it be mercy? That cannot be; and he offers a petition that Jehovah may allow justice to proceed. The interpretation of the verse as an "intercessory prayer on the part of the prophet that God will not punish the people too severely, but condemn them to barrenness rather than the loss of the young men," is less probable.

Verse 15 is the continuation of verse 13. **Their wickedness is in Gilgal**—Is focused there (iv, 15; xii, 10; compare Amos iv, 4; v, 5). Gilgal must have been a prominent center of Hebrew worship. Perhaps the prophet has in mind some recent flagrant outburst of wickedness, now unknown. **For**—Better, *yea.* **I hated**—The love for Ephraim (verse 10) was transformed into hate as a result of their wickedness, which Jehovah can endure no longer. **Drive them out of mine house**—As in viii, 1, equivalent to *my land;* this will mean separation from his presence (see on

I will love them no more: [m]all their princes *are* revolters. **16** Ephraim is smitten, their root is dried up, they shall bear no fruit: yea, [n]though they bring forth, yet will I slay *even* [9]the beloved *fruit* of their womb. **17** My God will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto him: and they shall be [o]wanderers among the nations.

[m] Isa. 1. 23.——[n] Verse 13.——[9] Heb. *the desires*, Ezek. 24. 21.——[o] Deut. 28. 64, 65.

CHAPTER X.

ISRAEL *is* [a] [1]an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto him-

[a] Nah. 2. 2.——[1] Or, *a vine emptying the fruit which it giveth.*

verse 3; compare 1 Sam. xxvi, 19), and from his interest and love—Jehovah will completely withdraw his mercy and favor. **All their princes are revolters**—Indicates one of the chief reasons for Jehovah's rejection of Israel. The nobles who should have been the leaders of the common people have rebelled against their great leader, Jehovah, and thus they have become misleaders (Isa. iii, 12). The original contains a play upon words (as in Isa. i, 23), which may be reproduced partly by rendering, "Their princes are unprincipled." The judgment upon Israel is further described in verse 16. In 16a, under the figure of a plant whose roots are dried up as a result of being smitten with withering heat (compare Jer. xvii, 8), or by a worm (Jonah iv, 7), so that it can bear no more fruit (compare verse 11b); 16b returns to the thought of verses 11, 12, the destruction of the nation by cutting off the children and young men. 16b would be most appropriate between 11 and 12; the former speaks of the cessation of childbirth; 16b continues, if by some chance children should be born, Jehovah will slay them; then 12 adds, if somehow they should live for a while, they will die before reaching manhood (so Marti). In verse 17 the prophet repeats, in his own words, the threat expressed by Jehovah in verse 15. **My God**—He is still the prophet's God, but no longer that of Israel. **Did not hearken**—The appeals of the prophet fell upon deaf ears (compare iv, 10). Now Jehovah must cast them off. Here the judgment is thought of not as extermination, but as banishment among the nations (verse 15). **Wanderers**—Or, *fugitives* (Gen. iv, 12); the same verb is used in a different sense in vii, 13. To secure a more satisfactory logical connection Harper rearranges verses 10–17 as follows, 10, 11, 16, 12 (except the last clause), 13, 14, 15, 12 (last clause), 17.

CHAPTER X.

Israel's Guilt and Punishment, 1–8.

Using the figure of a luxuriant vine, the prophet describes Israel's external prosperity; it increased steadily, but instead of bringing forth good grapes it brought forth bitter grapes (Isa. v, 1–7; Psa. lxxx, 8ff.). The greater the prosperity the more flagrant the moral and religious corruption (1, 2). Therefore altars, idols, and pillars shall be broken down, the calves of Samaria shall be carried into Assyria, priests and people shall be in terror and shall mourn (2–6); even the king shall be cut off (7). The high places shall be destroyed, thorns and thistles shall grow over them, and in terror the people shall cry for the mountains and hills to fall upon them (8).

1, 2. **Empty vine**—Or, *emptying vine*, that is, the vine that "pours forth its internal strength in abundance of growth and fruit"; therefore R. V., correctly, "luxuriant" (compare ix, 10). **He bringeth forth fruit unto himself**—Instead of bringing forth fruit for his owner, Jehovah; R. V. makes it a relative clause and renders, "that putteth forth his fruit"; the vine is also fruitful. **Fruit**—Prosperity, wealth, and power. Probably a reference to the successes achieved under Jeroboam II (2 Kings xiv, 23ff.). The greater the prosperity the more

self: according to the multitude of his fruit [b]he hath increased the altars; according to the goodness of his land [c]they have made goodly [2]images. 2 [3]Their heart is [d]divided; now shall they be found faulty: he shall [4]break down their altars, he shall spoil their images. 3 [e]For now they shall say, We have no king, because we feared not the LORD; what then should a king do to us? 4 They have spoken words, swearing falsely in making a covenant: thus judgment springeth up [f]as hemlock

[b] Chaps. 8. 11; 12. 11.——[c] Chap. 8. 4.——[2] Heb. *statues*, or, *standing images*.——[3] Or, *He hath divided their heart*.——[d] 1 Kings 18. 21; Matt. 6. 24.

[4] Heb. *behead*.——[e] Verse 7; chaps. 3. 4; 11. 5; Mic. 4. 9.——[f] See Deut. 29. 18; Amos 5. 7; 6. 12; Acts 8. 23; Heb. 12. 15.

he (Israel) hath increased the ["multiplied his"] **altars**—If interpreted in the light of other expressions of Hosea, the prophet seems to condemn here not the multiplication of altars as such; he condemns them rather on account of the corruption of the worship centering there (ii, 5ff.; viii, 4, 11). The more their prosperity increased the more forgetful of Jehovah and the more devoted to the Baals they became. **Goodness** — Better, margin R. V., "prosperity." The increase of prosperity made it possible to beautify the ceremonial. **Images** ["pillars"]—Compare iii, 4; see on Mic. v, 13. **Their heart is divided**—Between the Baals and Jehovah. If this meaning of the verb, favored by the ancient versions, is accepted, the margin presents a more literal translation, "He hath divided their heart." The meaning *smooth*, or, *slippery*, suggested in R. V. margin, is more probable, however; their heart was *slippery*, that is, fickle and insincere, in its devotion to Jehovah. But the time of reckoning has come. **Found faulty**—R. V., "guilty"; better still, "they shall be dealt with as guilty," or "they shall atone for their guilt." The first blow will reveal the inefficiency of their worship and Jehovah's displeasure with the same. **He**—Jehovah; the pronoun is emphatic in Hebrew. **Break down** ["smite"] **their altars**—Literally, *break the neck*, a very forceful expression; the breaking of the neck means utter destruction.

Recent commentators call attention to the fact that verse 5 is a more natural continuation of verse 2 than verses 3, 4; this and other minor reasons are urged against the originality of the two verses, but the arguments can hardly be regarded as conclusive. Verse 3 may be understood as a confession wrung from the Israelites by the terrors of the calamity announced in 2b. **We have no king**—No rightful king; no king worthy of the name. **Feared**—*Fear of Jehovah* is the common Old Testament expression for piety; it means such reverence for Jehovah as will prompt obedience to his will; this was lacking when they set up their kings (viii, 4). **What then should a king do to us**—R. V., literally and more satisfactorily, "and the king (the one we do have) what can he do for us?"—in the hour of distress and calamity (compare verses 7, 15; xiii, 10). He is absolutely powerless.

Verse 1 calls attention to *religious* apostasy; verse 4 describes some phases of the moral degeneracy. **Have spoken**—Or, R. V., "speak." **Words**—Mere words, which come only from the lips (Isa. xxxvi, 5; lviii, 13), which R. V. interprets to mean "vain words"; but the prophet means more than that—actual falsehoods (Isa. xxix, 21). **Swearing falsely in making a covenant**—The two expressions should be kept apart, as margin R. V. suggests: "they swear falsely (see on iv, 2), they make covenants." Not covenants made in ordinary life, but the covenants with Assyria and Egypt; these are displeasing to Jehovah (v, 13; vii, 11; xii, 1). **Judgment**—Best understood of the punitive judgment of Jehovah. With 4b begins the announcement of the divine judgment. If this is the correct interpretation, the tenses must be understood as

in the furrows of the field. **5** The inhabitants of Samaria shall fear because of [g]the calves of [h]Beth-aven: for the people thereof shall mourn over it, and [5]the priests thereof *that* rejoiced on it, [i]for the glory thereof, because it is departed from it. **6** It shall be also carried unto Assyria *for* a present to [k]king Jareb: Ephraim shall receive shame, and Israel shall be ashamed [l]of his own counsel. **7** [m]*As for* Samaria,

[g] 1 Kings 12. 28, 29; chap. 8. 5, 6.—[h] Chap. 4. 15.—[5] Or, *Chemarim*, 2 Kings 23. 5; Zeph. 1. 4.

[i] 1 Sam. 4. 21, 22; chap. 9. 11.—[k] Chap. 5. 13.—[l] Chap. 11. 6.—[m] Verses 3, 15.

prophetic perfects, to be translated, with margin of R. V., "shall spring up." **As hemlock**—From this passage and from Deut. xxix, 18, where the word is translated "gall," it appears that the Hebrew *rôsh* refers to some poisonous plant, though it may be difficult to say which one; it is certainly not equivalent to the simple *weed*. Since the Hebrew word means also *head* it is thought by many to be a name for the poppy, of which several specimens are found in Palestine. Whatever it may be, it is always used in the Old Testament as a symbol of bitterness (Lam. iii, 19; Amos vi, 12, etc.); so that the thought is that the judgment shall be as bitter as the hemlock (?) which grows in the furrows of the field.

5. The judgment will produce consternation. Will the "calves" be able to help? No! Instead, the people will have the greatest concern for them. This is certainly an ironical situation. **Calves**—LXX. and Peshitto have the singular, *calf*, which is favored by *his*, that is, the calf's, people and priest. If the plural is correct it would indicate that more than one calf (1 Kings xii, 29) was worshiped there. **Beth-aven**—Beth-el (iv, 15). **Mourn**—Because of the impending doom. **Priests**—Heb. *Chemārîm*. Not the common Old Testament term for priests. In Syriac and Aramaic it is the ordinary term for priests; in the Old Testament it seems to be confined to the priests ministering at the high places and in connection with the calf worship, which Hosea considers a counterfeit Jehovah worship; it is therefore a term of contempt (Zeph. i, 4; 2 Kings xxiii, 5). The English translation carries "shall mourn" over to the next clause as the predicate of the subject *priests;* but the Hebrew, contrary to the English translation, seems to connect "rejoiced" with priests, so as to read, "and the priests thereof shall rejoice for it, for the glory thereof, because it is departed from it." The thought of rejoicing is out of place here; we expect a verb similar to *mourn*. Some commentators, though admitting that elsewhere the verb is used to express joyful emotions, think that here it is used in the sense of *running about distracted with grief*. The change of one consonant produces a verb *to writhe, to tremble*, and a verb of such or similar meaning is expected here. **For the glory**—Defines more clearly *for it;* the glory of the calf consists of its prestige, its influence, and not only of the "costly apparatus of its worship." Its prestige vanishes when it proves itself unable to assist its worshipers, or even to protect itself.

6. The calf itself will be carried to Assyria for a present—Not a present to secure help (vii, 11; xii, 1), though LXX. reads, "they shall carry it"; but after the conquest it is to be carried off as a part of the booty, which will be an additional proof of its helplessness. **King Jareb**—See on v, 13. **Shall receive shame, . . . shall be ashamed**—Not so much, they will have a sense of remorse and shame, but, they will be put to shame or confusion (Isa i, 29). **Of**—Or, *through*. **His own counsel**—*Counsel* is the ability to find ways and means and to adapt them to proper ends (compare Isa. xi, 2). The establishment of the calf worship was thought to be a master stroke (1 Kings xii, 26ff.);

her king is cut off as the foam upon [6]the water. 8 [n]The high places also of Aven, [o]the sin of Israel, shall be destroyed: [p]the thorn and the thistle shall come up on their altars; [q]and they shall say to the mountains, Cover us; and to the hills, Fall on us. 9 [r]O Israel, thou hast sinned from the days of Gibeah: there they stood: [s]the battle in Gib-

[6] Heb. *the face of the water.*—[n] Chap. 4. 15.—[o] Deut. 9. 21; 1 Kings 12. 30.

[p] Chap. 9. 6.—[q] Isa. 2. 19; Luke 23. 30; Rev. 6, 16; 9. 6.—[r] Chap. 9. 9.—[s] See Judg. 20.

it is that very policy that will prove Israel's undoing.

Verse 7 should be translated, "Samaria is destroyed, her king is like foam upon the water." The tenses are *prophetic* perfects, equivalent to *shall be*, for the destruction is still future (verses 6, 8). The judgment will reach its climax in the fall of Samaria. It did so when about fifteen years later the city was taken by Sargon of Assyria, in 722–721. **Her king**—The ruling monarch, not the idol god (Amos v, 26). **As the foam**—So Targum, Vulgate, and a few modern commentators. The meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain Probably, *like a chip*, which is tossed about and, irresistibly carried hither and thither by the stream, finally vanishes forever.

Verse 8 in a sense continues verse 6; the calf is to be carried away and the very place where it has stood is to be smitten by Jehovah. To prevent the apparent interruption of the thought and to preserve the climax Harper places 8a immediately after verse 6. **High places**—See on iv, 13. **Aven**—Beth-aven (verse 5). **Sin**—They were the embodiment of Israel's sin (compare iv, 12ff.). The sanctuary, the altar, everything will vanish so completely that thorns and thistles will be allowed to grow undisturbed upon the ancient site (ix, 6). When the king has been swept away, the capital destroyed, the idols carried away, the sanctuary leveled to the ground, when all this has come to pass the people that are left behind will in their despair cry out for swift death and destruction; they will call for the mountains to cover them that they may be compelled no longer to endure the terrible judments of Jehovah (compare Luke xxiii, 30; Rev. vi, 16).

ISRAEL'S HISTORY—ONE CONTINUOUS CRIME; ISRAEL'S DESTINY—DEATH AND DESTRUCTION, 9–15.

With verse 9 the prophet begins a new presentation of Israel's guilt. In the very beginning a great crime darkened their history (9); from that time on they have resisted every effort to lead them into a higher and purer life; hence death and destruction await them (9–11). The announcement of judgment is interrupted by an exhortation to repentance (12), which immediately changes again into a threat (13–15). 9. **From the days of Gibeah**—The reference is to the outrage in Gibeah described in Judg. xix–xxi (compare ix, 9). Beth-baal-peor (ix, 10) marked the beginning of religious corruption; Gibeah was the scene of the first outbreak of deep moral corruption. Since then conditions had not changed materially. This interpretation is preferable to that implied in the marginal reading, "thou hast sinned more than in the days of Gibeah." The latter part of verse 9 is open to various interpretations. For the second clause, *there they stood*, the margin offers a more satisfactory translation "there have they continued." For this meaning of the verb compare Jer. xxxii, 14; Isa. xlvii, 12. **There**—In Gibeah, or, rather, in the criminal conduct of Gibeah. **The battle**—In which judgment was executed upon the guilty tribe (Judg. xx, 1ff.). If 9b is rendered a declaratory sentence the verb must be reproduced by a past tense, "did not overtake them." If so, the thought is that, while the criminals of Gibeah

eah against the children of iniquity did not overtake them. **10** [t]*It is* in my desire that I should chastise them; and [u]the people shall be gathered against them, [7]when they shall bind themselves in their two furrows. **11** And Ephraim *is as* [x]an heifer *that is* taught, *and* loveth to tread out *the corn*: but I passed over upon [8]her fair neck: I will make Ephraim to ride; Judah shall plow, *and* Jacob shall break his clods.

[t] Deut. 28. 63.—[u] Jer. 16. 16; Ezek. 23. 46, 47; chap. 8. 10.—[7] Or, *when I shall bind them for their two transgressions*, **or,** *in their two habitations*.—[x] Jer. 50. 11; Mic. 4. 13.—[8] Heb. *the beauty of her neck*.

received their reward, just punishment has not yet been visited upon Israel. But, verse 10 continues, the judgment cannot be withheld forever. 9b may be translated also as a question: "Shall not the battle . . . overtake them?" that is, can these people, persisting in vice, believe that they will escape retribution? Verse 10 supplies the answer: **It is in my desire**—Better, R. V., "When it is my desire." Jehovah does not overlook the crimes; when the proper moment arrives he will execute judgment.

The verses following show that the time of vengeance has arrived. The punishment will take the form of hostile invasions by Assyria (verse 6), by Egypt (ix, 6). **When they shall bind themselves in their two furrows**—In the rendering of the last word the translators have followed the Targum. The Hebrew is uncertain; LXX. and Vulgate translate "iniquities"; so R. V., "when they are bound to their two transgressions." The two transgressions are not the two calves at Beth-el and Dan, but the twofold sin indicated in viii, 4: the setting up of kings contrary to the divine will, and the religious apostasy expressing itself in reliance upon foreign nations and in the worship of the Baals. *When they are bound* is of uncertain meaning. Some interpret it as a causal clause—because they are bound, inseparably devoted, to their transgressions; others, as a temporal clause—when they are bound, or, when I bind them, in punishment for their transgressions. LXX. and Peshitto render "chastise," which favors the second interpretation; and this is to be preferred unless the text is changed. By the alteration of one consonant the whole clause may be made to read, "In order to bind (chastise) them for their two transgressions."

Verse 11 contains a new figurative description of the punishment to be meted out. Now Ephraim is in peace and prosperity, but soon suffering and distress will overtake him. **Taught**—Broken in to work. **Loveth to tread out the corn**—A pleasant and easy task, especially since the animals were allowed to eat freely of the grain (Deut. xxv, 4). Some consider *taught* inappropriate here, because, they say, the breaking in to do heavy work is a part of the punishment; for this reason they either omit it, and read, "And Ephraim is a heifer that loveth to tread out the grain"—but he will not be permitted to do this delightful work much longer—or they add *not;* "a heifer that is *not* taught." All he has done thus far is to tread out the grain, but in the future he will be subjected to severer treatment. **But I passed over upon her fair neck**—It is a disputed question whether this clause continues the description of the kind treatment—I have spared the beauty of her neck—that is, thus far the heifer has not been compelled to do any hard work; the rest of the verse would call attention to the change of treatment about to take place; or whether with it begins the threat: I placed the yoke upon her fair neck. If this interpretation, which seems preferable because it restores the parallelism, is accepted, the tense is to be understood as a *prophetic* perfect. The Hebrew permits either interpretation. **Make Ephraim to ride**—R. V., "set a rider on Ephraim."

12 [y]Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; [z]break up your fallow ground: for *it is* time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you. 13 [a]Ye have plowed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity; ye have eaten the fruit of lies: because thou didst trust

[y] Prov. 11. 18.—[z] Jer. 4. 3.

[a] Job 4. 8; Prov. 22. 8; chap. 8. 7; Gal. 6. 7, 8.

An even more probable rendering is, "I will make Ephraim to draw," that is, the plow or the cart. North and south alike will share in the punishment. Instead of treading out the grain they will be compelled to do the hard work of plowing and harrowing. Since nowhere in this connection is there any reference to Judah, it is probable that in the last part of verse 11 *Israel* should be read instead of *Judah*.

12. Momentarily the tone of the prophet changes to one of exhortation. If Israel would only turn and seek Jehovah the judgment might yet be averted. For such turning the prophet pleads. But he seems to recognize the uselessness of the appeal, for in verses 13ff. he reiterates the threats of 9–11. The figures are borrowed again from agricultural pursuits. **Sow . . . in righteousness**—Let your conduct be governed by righteousness, by such attitude toward God and man as is proper in view of the covenant relation between Jehovah and Israel. **Reap in mercy** ["according to kindness"]—Let the effects of your life be such as are in accord with loving-kindness (see on ii, 19). LXX., "reap the fruit of kindness." **Break up your fallow ground**—The transformation is to be thorough. "Husbandmen in the East are indolent and sometimes sow among thorns (Jer. iv, 3; Matt. xiii, 7). The Israelites are warned against committing this fault in their spiritual husbandry." The three clauses "sow . . . reap . . . break up" should be interpreted as containing three distinct exhortations. **It is time**—The door of mercy is still open, the judgment may yet be averted. **Seek Jehovah**—See on Amos v, 4. **Till he come and rain righteousness upon you**—This translation is to be preferred over the one suggested in the margin, "teach you righteousness" (see on Joel ii, 23). *Till he come* is to be understood as a final clause, "in order that he may come." *Rain* is a picture of abundance, and the entire clause may be paraphrased, "in order that Jehovah may manifest his righteousness toward you in abundant measure." Jehovah's righteousness, like Israel's righteousness, is the attitude which is proper in view of the covenant relation between Israel and Jehovah. As such it may manifest itself either in judgment or in mercy. If Israel will follow the prophetic exhortation it will manifest itself in the merciful withholding of judgment. LXX. reads, "in order that (until) the fruit of righteousness (prosperity) may come to you." *Fruit of lies* in verse 13 is in favor of the LXX. reading.

13a contrasts their past conduct and experiences with the conduct demanded in verse 12. **Plowed wickedness**—*Plowed* is equivalent to *sowed* (verse 12); they formed wicked plans (Job iv, 8). **Reaped iniquity**—The fruits of their lives have been iniquity, not loving-kindness. **Fruit of lies**—Or, *of faithlessness*, that is, to Jehovah (xi, 12). They were compelled to endure disaster and calamity. The tenses in this verse are not prophetic perfects; they describe past experiences.

With 13b begins the reiteration of the threat, 13b being the protasis, verse 14 the apodosis. The transition from one clause to the other is somewhat abrupt, but the reference in 13a to the policy of "lies" prepares the way for 13b, which makes it plain wherein consisted the faithlessness: instead of relying upon Jehovah they put their trust in human defenses (Isa. vii, 9). **In thy way**—Thy policy. LXX. (except B) and Vulgate read, "thy chariots" (compare xiv, 3; Isa.

in thy way, in the multitude of thy mighty men. 14 [b]Therefore shall a tumult arise among thy people, and all thy fortresses shall be spoiled, as Shalman spoiled [c]Beth-arbel in the day of battle: [d]the mother was dashed in pieces upon *her* children. 15 So shall Beth-el do unto you because of [g]your great wickedness: in a morning [e]shall the king of Israel utterly be cut off.

[b] Chap. 13. 16.—[c] 2 Kings 18. 34; 19. 13.

[d] Chap. 13. 16.—[g] Heb. *the evil of your evil.*—[e] Verse 7.

ii, 7), which is favored by the context. **Mighty men**—The army. **Therefore**—Because of the lack of confidence in Jehovah (Isa. vii, 9). **Tumult**—Of war (Isa. xvii, 12; Amos ii, 2). **Among**—Better, R. V. margin, "against." **Thy people**—Hebrew, "thy peoples"; the tribes of which the nation is composed (Deut. xxxiii, 3). The emendation "against thy cities" is not needed. The destruction to be wrought is compared with that of **Beth-arbel** by **Shalman**—Both of these proper names have been and are still subjects of much discussion. Shalman has been identified with (1) Shalmaneser III of Assyria, who "made an expedition to the Lebanon in 775 and to Damascus in 773–772" (Harper) (for similar abbreviations compare Jer. xxii, 24, 28, xxiv, 1, with 2 Kings xxiv, 6); (2) Shalmaneser IV of Assyria (727–722 B. C.), who undertook an expedition against Israel in 725; (3) Salamanu, a king of Moab, a contemporary of Hosea, who paid tribute to Tiglath-pileser III of Assyria; (4) Shalmah, a north Arabian tribe, which invaded the Negeb; (5) the Zalmunna of Judg. viii, 6. *Arbela* has been identified with (1) Arbela, near Pella, east of the Jordan; (2) Arbela on the Tigris, near Nineveh; (3) Arbela in the territory of Naphtali, in Upper Galilee (1 Mac. ix, 2). The words which in Hebrew stand together have also been taken as the name of a city Shalman-beth-arbela. (For similar formations see 2 Sam. xx, 14, 15; Num. xxxiii, 46.) Thus far no entirely satisfactory solution of the question has been found. From the reference it would seem that the event in question was well known and therefore probably one of recent date and of considerable importance; but our present historical knowledge does not enable us to connect any of the persons named with the destruction of any of the localities suggested. The campaign of 775 is said to have been against the "country of Erini," the country of the cedar trees; that of 773–772 was undertaken probably by the successor of Shalmaneser III, Ashur-dan III. If it is Shalmaneser IV the passage must be a later addition, since Hosea's activity ended before this king ascended the throne. The ancient versions offer no solution; they also seem to have been in the dark. **The mother was dashed in pieces**—A circumstantial clause to be connected with the preceding, "when the mother was dashed in pieces" (xiii, 16; compare 2 Kings viii, 12; Amos i, 13; Psa. cxxxvii, 8, 9).

In verse 15 Jehovah addresses the Israelites directly, announcing that a similar fate is awaiting them on account of their great wickedness. The construction of the first sentence is uncertain. **So shall Beth-el do**—Beth-el as the center of idolatrous worship is to bring about the downfall of Israel. This translation is a little awkward. Others have interpreted Beth-el as an accusative of place, "at Beth-el," while they have supplied the subject of the verb, either Jehovah or Shalman, "So shall *he* do at Beth-el." But if Beth-el is not the subject it is better taken as a vocative: "So shall he do unto thee, O Beth-el." Beth-el, the religious center, stands for the whole country or nation, just as sometimes the capital, Samaria, is used in the place of Israel. LXX. presents a more satisfactory reading, "Thus I will do unto you, O house of Israel." **Your great wickedness**—Literally, *the wick-*

CHAPTER XI.

WHEN [a]Israel *was* a child, then I loved him, and [b]called my [c]son out of Egypt. 2 *As* they called them, so they went from them: [d]they sacrificed unto Baalim, and

[a] Chap. 2. 15.—[b] Matt. 2. 15.—[c] Exod. 4. 22,23.—[d] 2 Kings 17. 16; chaps. 2. 13; 13. 2.

edness of your wickedness (compare Song of Songs—the song *par excellence;* holy of holies—the most holy) **In a morning**—R. V., "at daybreak." The meaning is uncertain. Some see in the phrase the thought that at daybreak it will be discovered that during the night the king has been slain; others, that he will be cut off in the early morning hours—the king's death is the first event of the day (Psa. xc, 14); still others, "as suddenly as comes the dawn after a night of slumber." Keil understands it as the dawn of prosperity; just as prosperity begins to dawn the king will perish. The expression remains peculiar. A change of one consonant would give "in the storm," that is, of battle. **King of Israel**—Not one particular king, but the institution of the monarchy.

CHAPTER XI.

The Father's Love for the Prodigal Son, 1–11.

Once more the prophet reverts to the early history of Israel (compare ix, 10; x, 9). He points out how great, strong, and tender has been the divine love (1, 3, 4), and how unappreciative and ungrateful the chosen people (2, 7); hence justice demands the execution of judgment (5, 6). But Israel is still the *son* of Jehovah, and the divine compassion goes out for the prodigal (8); therefore the punishment will be tempered by mercy; and after the judgment has accomplished its disciplinary purpose Israel will be restored to the divine favor (9–11). Verse 12 (in Heb. xii, 1) is connected more closely with chapter xii.

1. **A child**—The childhood of Israel is the earliest stage of its national existence, here identified with the stay in Egypt (compare ii, 3; ix, 10). **I loved him**—Or, *I began to love him* (compare ix, 15). **Called my son out of Egypt**—Literally, *called for my son,* that is, to be my son. Out of all the nations of the earth Jehovah selected Israel to sustain filial relations to him. Other passages (Exod. iv, 22; Deut. xiv, 1, etc.) imply that Jehovah regarded Israel as his son even while in Egypt, not that he called him from Egypt to become his son. This seeming difference of conception has led commentators to propose various emendations. The simplest, supported in part by LXX., is to omit the preposition *le.* With this omission the text reads, "I called my son." It should be noted, however, that, especially in later Hebrew, the preposition *le* is used to introduce the direct object (G.-K., 117n). Following this rule even the present text might be read, "I called my son." 1b is interpreted as Messianic in Matt. ii, 15.

2. Jehovah's love was met with bitter ingratitude. **As they called**—R. V., "The more *the prophets* called." *The prophets* is not in the Hebrew, but the Revisers were correct in supplying it as the subject (compare verse 7). Jehovah did not cease calling when the efforts of Moses proved a partial failure; he raised up prophets (Amos ii, 11, 12), but the more earnestly these labored the more stubborn the resistance of the people (compare Isa. vi, 9, 10; Jer. vii, 25, 26). Notwithstanding the people's obstinacy, the activity of the prophets was not a failure; it resulted in the preservation of a remnant out of which might grow a new nation of God. Much did the prophets expect of this remnant, and much did it accomplish, though not all that the prophets expected. Nevertheless it prepared the way for him who alone was able to *finish* the work. A very slight change in the text, supported in part by LXX. and Peshitto, would give, "The more I called them, the more they went from me." **Baalim**

burned incense to graven images. 3 [e]I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that [f]I healed them. 4 I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love: and [g]I was to them as they that [l]take off the yoke on their jaws, and [h]I laid meat unto them.

5 [i]He shall not return into the land of Egypt, but the Assyrian shall be his king, [k]because they re-

[e] Deut. 1. 31; 32. 10, 11, 12; Isa. 46. 3.—[f] Exod. 15. 26.—[g] Lev. 26. 13.—[l] Heb. *lift up.*—[h] Psa. 78. 25; chap. 2. 8.—[i] See chaps. 8. 13; 9. 3.—[k] 2 Kings 17. 13, 14.

—See on ii, 5. **Burned incense**—See on ii, 13. **Graven images**—See on Mic. v, 13. Verses 1, 2 aptly describe the religious history from the Exodus to the days of Hosea; on the one hand, the intense love and care of Jehovah, on the other, the persistent rebellion of the people.

Verse 3 presents the tender care of Jehovah under the figure of a parent's gentle dealings with his child. **I**—Emphatic in Hebrew; in contrast to the Baalim. **Ephraim**—The northern kingdom. **Taught . . . to go**—Directed their footsteps in a providential way, kept them from falling and, when they did fall, helped them to rise again. **Taking them by their arms**—Literally (though the Hebrew form is peculiar), *he took them upon his arms.* R. V., following most ancient versions, "I took them on my arms." A climax to the preceding. I lovingly taught the young child to walk, and when he grew weary I lovingly took him upon my arms and carried him (Isa. lxiii, 9; Deut. i, 31). **They knew not**—See on ii, 8. **That I healed them**—A common figure in Hosea (v, 13; vi, 1; vii, 1; compare Exod. xv, 26). To get the full meaning it is necessary to supply the thought, "When in their attempt to walk they fell and hurt themselves."

Verse 4 contains a new figure of the fatherly care of Jehovah. "Israel is no longer the wanton young cattle of the previous chapter (x, 11), which needs the yoke firmly fastened on the neck but a team of toiling oxen mounting some steep road." Jehovah acted not the part of a cruel driver, but in a humane manner assisted the animal to accomplish its task. **Drew**—Not *drove;* he lent a helping hand to the weary beast. **Cords of a man**—Such as are adapted to a human being; these are **bands** (cords) **of love**—Used in a spirit of love. Through love he sought to control and guide. **Take off** ["lift up"] **the yoke on their jaws**—While he gladly assisted the animal, he did not—and could not—take the whole task upon himself. The yoke remained upon the animal, but he placed it so it would not press too heavily upon the neck and jaws (cheeks) and make them sore. The manner of easing the yoke to which the prophet refers is not quite clear, since we do not know sufficiently the form of the ancient yoke. **I laid meat unto them** ["food before them"]—Literally, *and gently I laid food before them,* or, better still, *And I bent toward him and gave him food.* The task done, plenty of food was given to the animal. Thus in an indulgent and compassionate manner Jehovah supplied the needs of his people.

5–7. All this loving-kindness Israel met with shameful ingratitude; therefore judgment, in the form of an exile, will surely come (viii, 13; ix, 3). **He** ["they"] **shall not return into . . . Egypt**—An evident contradiction of viii, 13; ix, 3–6; xi, 11. What we would expect is, "they shall return to Egypt." LXX. removes this difficulty by connecting the word translated *not* with the preceding sentence and rendering it *for him,* which involves the change of one consonant without affecting the pronunciation; but this creates a grammatical difficulty in the preceding clause. Another attempt to remove the difficulty is to read 5a as a rhetorical question: "Shall they not return?" This implies the answer, "They surely shall return." A rhetorical question, however, seems out of place, and a more

fused to return. 6 And the sword shall abide on his cities, and shall consume his branches, and devour *them*, [l]because of their own counsels. 7 And my people are bent to [m]backsliding from me: [n]though they called them to the most High, [2]none at all would exalt *him*. 8 [o]How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? *how* shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as [p]Admah? *how* shall I set thee as Zeboim? [q]mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together. 9 I will not

[1] Chap. 10. 6.——[m] Jer. 3. 6, etc.; 8. 5; chap. 4. 16.——[n] Chap. 7. 16.——[2] Heb. *together they exalted not.*——[o] Jer. 9. 7; chap. 6. 4.——[p] Gen. 14. 8; 19. 24, 25; Deut. 29. 23; Amos 4. 11.——[q] Deut. 32. 36; Isa. 63. 15; Jer. 31. 20.

natural way out of the difficulty is to omit the negative. Assyria is, as in the other passages, joined with Egypt. **But**—Hebrew, "and." The exile will come because Israel failed to turn to Jehovah in repentance and obedience (compare Amos iv, 6ff.).

Verse 7 is the natural continuation of 5b, verse 6 of 5a. Some omit verse 6 as a later insertion, but without sufficient reason; nevertheless it is possible that the text has suffered in transmission. Verses 6, 7 contain an emphatic and explanatory reiteration of the thought of verse 5. **Sword**—The symbol of war (Ezek. xiv, 17). **Abide on** ["fall upon"]—The literal rendering is stronger, *rage in*, or, *whirl about in*. **Branches**—Better R. V., "bars." Defenses in general (compare Amos i, 5). The meaning of the Hebrew word used here is not quite certain. **Because of their own counsels**—Compare x, 6. Modern commentators, almost without exception, consider the text of verse 7 hopelessly corrupt. The Hebrew is awkward and obscure, and the ancient versions differ both from the Hebrew and from one another. If the text is correct the translations of A. V. and R. V. are on the whole as satisfactory as any; however, the translation of 7b may be improved by reading: "Though they call them upward, none at all will lift himself up." There is a complete moral apathy, no one even attempts to mend his ways; and this apathy is due to the spirit of apostasy which has taken complete possession of them. **They**—The prophets. **Called them**—The people. **To the most High**—To higher things in morals and religion. It is not necessary even to enumerate the different attempts to improve the text of verse 7. The reconstruction by Harper may serve as an illustration of the radical character of some of these proposed emendations: "And my people having wearied me with their rebellions, unto the yoke (that is, captivity) Jehovah will appoint them, since he has ceased to love them."

Justice demands the casting off of Israel. Will the divine love and compassion permit it? Verse 8 pictures the struggle between love and justice. The result is, in a sense, a compromise. Judgment will indeed be executed, but instead of annihilating the nation it will serve to purify it. The judgment having accomplished its disciplinary purpose, Jehovah will visit his people with salvation. **How**—Introduces an exclamation, not a question. **Give thee up**—To destruction. The parallel clause is a repetition of the same thought, for the sake of emphasis. **Admah . . . Zeboim**—Two cities near Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. x, 19; xiv, 8), which, according to Deut. xxix, 23, were destroyed with the cities of the Plain. In Gen. xix nothing is said concerning their overthrow (but compare verse 25). **Mine heart is turned**—In sympathy and sorrow (Lam. i, 20). **My repentings**—Better, R. V., "my compassions." **Are kindled together**—Are thoroughly aroused. G. A. Smith, "my compassions begin to boil." The same author calls this "the greatest passage in Hosea—deepest, if not highest, of his book—the breaking forth of that exhaustless mercy of the Most High which no sin of man can bar back nor wear out."

execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: [r]for I *am* God, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee: and I will not enter into the city.

10 They shall walk after the LORD: [s]he shall roar like a lion: when he shall roar, then the children shall tremble [t]from the west. **11** They shall tremble as a bird out of Egypt,

[r] Num. 23. 19; Isa. 55. 8, 9; Mal. 3. 6.—[s] Isa. 31. 4; Joel 3. 16; Amos 1. 2.—[t] Zech. 8. 7.

The outcome of the struggle is expressed in verse 9. **Not return** (or, *turn*) **to destroy Ephraim**—Though judgment is decreed it will not be executed in the *fierceness* of the divine wrath. Having chosen and trained Israel for his own purpose, Jehovah cannot now turn around and undo all his former work. Why? **I am God, and not man**—Jehovah is, "in the grandeur of his covenant steadfastness and long-suffering, removed to an infinite height above the vacillations and impatience of man." The covenant was intended to be an everlasting covenant, and to it Jehovah must remain faithful. **Holy One**—Consequently free from the resentments of vengeance. The prophetic conception of the divine holiness is admirably expressed in the words of Kirkpatrick: "Primarily the Hebrew root from which the word is derived seems to denote *separation*. It represents God as distinct from man, separate from the creation which he has called into existence. Then, since limit is the necessary condition of created things, and imperfection and sinfulness are the marks of humanity in its fallen state, the term grows to denote the separation of God from all that is limited, imperfect, and sinful. But it does not rest here in a merely negative conception. It expands so as to include the whole essential nature of God in its moral aspect. . . . His purity and his righteousness, his faithfulness and his truth, his mercy and his loving-kindness, nay, even his jealousy and his wrath, his zeal and his indignation—these are the different rays which combine to make up his holiness." **In the midst of thee**—These words affirm the close relation existing between Jehovah and Israel (compare Isaiah's "the Holy One of Israel"). **I will not enter into the city**—A meaningless sentence. R. V., giving an entirely different meaning to the last word, reads "I will not come in wrath" (compare Jer. xv, 8), which is to be preferred. Some, changing one letter, read, "I will not come to consume."

Verses 8, 9 are in the highest degree anthropomorphic; but it is not proper to infer from this poetic portrayal that Hosea thought of Jehovah as being fickle, and subject to the same mental or spiritual processes as man. He simply attempted to describe vividly and forcibly the love and compassion of Jehovah, the depth of which had been impressed upon him by his own domestic experience; and this he could do only by comparing divine emotions with human emotions, and describing them in language familiar to his hearers.

10, 11. No promise is made that judgment will be withheld entirely. It must come, but it will not result in destruction. When it has accomplished its purpose the divine mercy will again manifest itself in the home-gathering of the dispersed exiles. **They shall walk after Jehovah**—Can, in this connection, mean only that when he gives the signal they will readily respond. **Roar like a lion**—That is, with a powerful voice. Not as in v, 14; xiii, 7, but to summon the scattered people (Isa. xi, 12; xxvii, 13; xlix, 22). When the signal is heard the exiles shall **tremble** ["come trembling"]—Though they recognize the call as the call of love, they tremble before the majesty and power of the caller (compare iii, 5). **The children**—In Hebrew without the article, "sons" or "children"; only those whom he may acknowledge as sons (verse 1; i, 10). **From the west**—Lit-

[u]and as a dove out of the land of Assyria: [x]and I will place them in their houses, saith the LORD. 12 [y]Ephraim compasseth me about with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit: but Judah yet ruleth with God, and is faithful [3]with the saints.

[u] Isa. 60. 8; chap. 7. 11.—[x] Ezek. 28. 25, 26; 37. 21, 25.

[y] Chap. 12. 1.—[3] Or, *with the most holy.*

erally, *from the sea,* the Mediterranean, which is west of Palestine; perhaps equivalent to "the islands of the sea" (Isa. xi, 11). Hosea expects the Israelites to go into exile to Assyria and to Egypt (verse 11), that is, to the south and east. Only in this passage he introduces a third place of exile. This peculiarity leads some to change the text so as to read, "from their captivity." **Bird . . . dove**—Ordinarily the flight of birds represents swiftness (Psa. lv, 6; Isa. lx, 8). If so here, *come trembling* cannot be a correct reproduction of the prophet's thought. "A thrill of eagerness doubling the speed of motion is what is meant"; equivalent to *they shall come swiftly* (see the comparison in vii, 11). **I will place them**—For the promise to reëstablish Israel in the old home see also ii, 23.

Most recent commentators consider verses 10, 11 later additions, because (1) they are thought to be out of harmony with verse 9 where the withdrawal of judgment is announced, while in these verses a dispersion is presupposed; (2) the verses contain expressions foreign to Hosea. To these verses are sometimes added verses 8, 9, in part, or even entire. The chief objection to these two verses is that they contain a promise which, it is said, weakens the preceding threat. In reply it may be said (1) verses 8, 9 do not imply a complete withholding of judgment; (2) the only peculiar expression is "from the west" (verse 10); (3) a promise does not necessarily weaken a previous threat. It would do so only if the promise were unconditional. Hosea believes that the divine favor may be regained; but he makes it perfectly clear that it can be done only on condition of sincere repentance (xiv, 1–3). As soon as the conditional character of a promise is recognized, the promise, far from weakening a threat, may become a strong incentive to repentance, to avert the fulfillment of the threat. Hence it will be seen that the objections raised against the originality of these verses are not conclusive.

CONDEMNATION OF ISRAEL'S FAITHLESSNESS; EXHORTATION TO REPENTANCE, xi, 12–xii, 6.

The following appears to be the most probable interpretation of this exceedingly difficult section. xi, 12, begins a new series of indictments. Israel proved false to Jehovah when it entered into covenants with foreign nations (xi, 12; xii, 1). If the references to Judah are original they cannot be interpreted as a eulogy of Judah, for north and south were equally guilty. The three incidents in the life of the patriarch Jacob are mentioned in order to present in glaring colors the contrast between the ancestor so anxious for the divine blessing and the descendants so indifferent to Jehovah (2–5). If they would only turn to the God of Jacob he would surely have mercy upon them (6).

12. **Compasseth me**—The lies were so numerous that Jehovah could see nothing else; they surrounded him completely. **Lies** ["falsehood"] . . . **deceit**—Practiced not against one another (verse 7), but against Jehovah. A condemnation of their foreign policy (vii, 11; x, 4, 13). **Ephraim . . . House of Israel**—The northern kingdom. 12b is of uncertain meaning. **But Judah yet ruleth with God, and is faithful with the saints**—Margin, "with the most holy," that is, God; R. V., "with the Holy One" (see on verse 9). This translation makes 12b a eulogy of Judah, which is thought to be better than Israel.

CHAPTER XII.

EPHRAIM [a]feedeth on wind, and followeth after the east wind: he daily increaseth lies and desolation; [b]and they do make a covenant with the Assyrians, and [c]oil is carried into Egypt. 2 [d]The LORD hath also a controversy with Judah, and will [1]punish Jacob according to his ways; according to his doings will he recompense him.

3 He took his brother [e]by the heel

[a] Chap. 8. 7.—[b] 2 Kings 17. 4; chaps. 5. 13; 7. 11.—[c] Isa. 30. 6; 57. 9.—[d] Chap. 4. 1; Mic. 6. 2.—[1] Heb. *visit upon.*—[e] Gen. 25. 26.

Such sentiment seems out of place here (xii, 2; see also on i, 7). The Revisers, conscious of this difficulty, offer in the margin the alternative reading, "and Judah is yet unsteadfast (faithless) with God, and with the Holy One who is faithful." This is certainly to be preferred; otherwise 12b must be regarded as a later addition. **Yet**—The faithlessness has continued for a long time, and still there is no sign of improvement.

CHAPTER XII.

1. **Feedeth on wind**—Israel seeks sustenance where sustenance cannot be found (viii, 7). **Followeth after**—See comment on "follow on" in vi, 3. **East wind**—The Sirocco; the most destructive wind of Palestine, blowing from the desert, accompanied by clouds of sand, and bringing suffering and anguish, and sometimes even death, to man and beast. The figure adds to the preceding the idea of destructiveness. They run not only after that which is unsubstantial and empty, but even after that which is positively harmful (v, 13; viii, 7). **Lies**—See on xi, 12. **Desolation**—The result of the policy of *lies*. Another possible translation is *violence*—acts of violence, which would be parallel with *lies* (compare iv, 2, 3). LXX. seems to have read a different word, though similar in appearance, "falsehood," rendered in x, 4, "falsely." "Lies and falsehood" would give good parallelism (xi, 12). 1a is explained in 1b. The policy of "wind" and "lies" found expression in appeals to Assyria and Egypt (v, 13; vii, 11, 12). **Covenant**—See on x, 4. **Oil**—One of the chief products of Palestine (see on Joel i, 10); it was offered to Egypt as a bribe to secure her favor (Isa. lvii, 9; compare 2 Kings xv, 19).

2. The southern kingdom was equally guilty. **Controversy**—See on iv, 1. **Judah**—Some substitute "Israel." *Also*, which is in the English translations, is not in the original (see on v, 5). **Jacob**—Since the name stands in parallelism with *Judah* it would seem to be a poetic synonym of the latter. If *Israel* is substituted in the first clause Jacob may be regarded as a poetic synonym of *Israel*, used so as to prepare the way for the references to the patriarch Jacob. If xi, 12b, is original still another interpretation is possible: Judah—the southern kingdom; Jacob, which is equivalent to Israel—the northern kingdom: the two together make up the whole nation. The third interpretation is favored by verse 13, which seems to imply that in chapter xii Hosea compares the whole nation with its ancestor. **His ways . . . doings**—The faithless conduct condemned in xi, 12; xii, 1 (compare iv, 9; vii, 2).

In verses 3–5 (compare verse 13) the prophet introduces abruptly a reference to three incidents in the life of the patriarch Jacob: one connected with his birth (Gen. xxv, 26), another with his return from Aram (Gen. xxxii, 22ff.), and a third with his journey to or from Aram (Gen. xxviii, 10–22; xxxv, 9–15). The place of these historical references in the argument of Hosea is variously interpreted. Some see in them a commendation of the patriarch, whose acts indicated his anxiety for divine and paternal blessings; this commendation implies a condemnation of his descendants who are spiritually indifferent. Others see in them a

in the womb, and by his strength he [2] [f]had power with God: 4 Yea, he had power over the angel and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him: he found him *in* [g]Beth-el, and there he spake with us; 5 Even the LORD of hosts; the LORD *is* his [h]memorial.

[2] Heb. *was a prince*, or, *behaved himself princely.*

[f] Gen. 32. 24, etc.——[g] Gen. 28. 12, 19; 35. 9, 10, 15.——[h] Exod. 3. 15.

condemnation of the patriarch, who even before his birth practiced deceit and who in manhood sought to take advantage of God and man. Small wonder that his descendants are full of lies and falsehoods. Still others see a condemnation of Jacob in the first reference and a commendation in the others. On the whole, the first interpretation is to be preferred. **Took his brother by the heel**—Though the exact meaning of the verb is uncertain, the thought is that Jacob desired to be born first, so as to enjoy the rights of the firstborn (Gen. xxvii, 36). The prophet does not justify the act. For purposes of illustration it is not necessary to pass judgment on the merits of an act (compare Luke xvi, 1ff.). In later life the patriarch manifested still greater anxiety for the divine blessing. **By his strength**—R. V., "in his manhood" (Gen. xlix, 3). **Had power with God**—Margin R. V., "strove"; margin A. V., "behaved himself princely." Again the exact meaning of the verb is uncertain. The reference is to Gen. xxxii, 22ff.

Verse 4 describes the conflict in greater detail. **The angel**—Equivalent to "God" in verse 3 (see on Zech. i, 11). **Prevailed**—His persistence was rewarded. **Wept**—Jacob's tears were a further evidence of his anxiety. The shedding of tears is not mentioned in Genesis. **Made supplication**—Compare Gen. xxxii, 26. If only Israel would follow the footsteps of Jacob they too would receive the divine blessing. **He**—It seems best to carry over the subject from the preceding and make *he* refer to Jacob. **Him**—Jehovah. Both the order and the prophet's purpose, to impress upon the Israelites the truth that the vision at Beth-el was the result of Jacob's spiritual longings, make it probable that he thought of that vision as having been granted on Jacob's return from Aram (Gen. xxxv, 9–15). **He spake**—That is, Jehovah. **With us**—What Jehovah said to Jacob applied equally to his descendants. The text is greatly improved, however, if we read, with Peshitto and other ancient versions, "with him," that is, with Jacob. LXX. also seems to have read the pronoun of the third person singular, though in other respects its text of 4b is inferior to the Hebrew.

Verse 5 is thought by many to be a later addition, "by some pious reader of a very late date." The English translators evidently took 5a in apposition to *he*, the subject of *spake* (verse 4). By identifying the God who blessed the yearning Jacob with Jehovah, whom, nominally at least, they worshiped as their deliverer and helper, the prophet prepared the way for the exhortation in verse 6. If he rewarded the perseverance of your ancestor he will in the same manner reward you, if you earnestly seek him. The thought remains the same if we regard, as seems more probable, verse 5 in construction independent of the preceding: "And Jehovah is the God of hosts; Jehovah is his memorial name." **Memorial**—R. V., "memorial name." The name by which the God of Israel is to be remembered (Exod. iii, 15). **Jehovah God of hosts**—Identical in meaning with the shorter "Jehovah of hosts." As used by the prophets this title designates Jehovah as the Lord of all powers in the world and in nature. There is still a difference of opinion as to the original significance of *host.* 1. Some think that *host* referred primarily to the angels. According to Ewald the phrase arose on the occasion of some great victory, when it

6 [i]Therefore turn thou to thy God: keep mercy and judgment, and [k]wait on thy God continually.

7 *He is* [3]a merchant, [l]the balances of deceit *are* in his hand: he loveth to [4]oppress. 8 And Ephraim said, [m]Yet I am become rich, I have found me out substance: [5]*in* all my labors

[i] Chap. 14. 1; Mic. 6. 8.——[k] Psa. 37. 7. ——[3] Or, *Canaan*, see Ezek. 16. 3.——[l] Prov. 11. 1; Amos 8. 5.——[4] Or, *deceive*.

[m] Zech. 11. 5; Rev. 3. 17.——[5] Or, *all my labors suffice me not*: he shall have *punishment of iniquity in whom* is *sin*.

seemed as if the host of heavenly beings had come down to the relief of the people (compare Psa. ciii, 21; Neh. ix, 6). 2. Others think that the *hosts* were originally the armies of Israel, whose leader Jehovah is represented as being (Exod. vii, 4; xii, 41, 51). 3. Still others take it to refer primarily to the stars, which are frequently called "the hosts of heaven" (Deut. iv, 19; Isa. xxxiv, 4). 4. Sayce connects it with Babylonian mythology. Jehovah he identifies with *Sin*, the moon-god. Sin is called "the enchanter of the spirits of the hosts." This title in its Hebrew form was, he thinks, transferred from Sin to Jehovah. But whatever the primary usage of the title the prophets gave to it a sublimer content.

6. **Therefore**—Because thy God is identical with the God of thy ancestor Jacob, a God whose pleasure it is to show mercy to every one who earnestly seeks him. **To thy God**—The Hebrew reads "in" or "into," the real force of which can be expressed only by a paraphrase: "Turn to thy God in such a manner as to enter into fellowship with him" (compare Isa. x, 22). A turning such as that described in vi, 1–3, is not sufficient. Wherein does the turning consist? **Keep mercy** ["kindness"]—Now lacking completely (iv, 1; compare vi, 6). **Judgment** ["justice"]—See on Mic. vi, 8 (compare Amos v, 24). **Wait on** ["for"] **thy God continually**—Exercise implicit faith in Jehovah; cease from putting confidence in human alliances and human defenses (verse 1; vii, 11; x, 13, etc.).

ISRAEL'S UNHOLY AMBITION AND BITTER DISAPPOINTMENT, 7–14.

Israel's sole ambition had been to accumulate material wealth, even by the use of the most shameful means. This ill-gotten gain, the prophet says, will avail nothing, for Jehovah is about to reduce Israel to poverty (7–9). The latter part of the section is obscure, due perhaps to a disarrangement of the verses. They seem to contain a complaint of Jehovah because the people disregarded and rejected the prophets whom he had raised up. This obstinacy makes the judgment inevitable (10–14).

7. **He is a merchant** ["trafficker"]—Literally, *Canaan*, without "he is"; hence margin of R. V., "As for Canaan, the . . . ," is preferable. Addressed to the degenerate Israel. Because of the commercial habits of the Canaanites, including the Phoenicians, *Canaan* became a synonym of *merchant* (Job xli, 6; Prov. xxxi, 24; compare Zeph. i, 11; Ezek. xvii, 4), just as *Chaldean*, at a later period, became a synonym of *astrologer*. "Instead of seeking high gifts from heaven, like its progenitor, Israel strives after money and goods, like the huckstering nation of the Canaanites." Israel adopted also the fraudulent ways of the Canaanites (compare *Odyssey*, xiv, 290, 291). **Balances of deceit**—Balances with which deceit is practiced. They "doctored" the scales in order to take advantage of the buyer (Amos viii, 5). **Oppress**—Better, with margin, R. V., "defraud." It is significant that the prophet condemns as strongly the people's attitude toward one another (compare iv, 1) as he condemns that toward Jehovah.

8. Israel had been successful in realizing its ambition; now arrogantly it congratulates itself on the acquisition of wealth and riches. **They shall**

they shall find none iniquity in me [e]that *were* sin. **9** And [n]I *that am* the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt [o]will yet make thee to dwell in tabernacles, as in the days of the solemn feast. **10** [p]I have also spok-

[e] Heb. *which.*——[n] Chap. 13. 4.——[o] Lev. 23. 42, 43; Neh. 8. 17; Zech. 14. 16.

[p] 2 Kings 17. 13.

find none iniquity in me that were sin—Thus rendered 8b is a continuation of Israel's boast, maintaining that the wealth had been gained honestly; and even if some things should have been done that might seem inconsistent these could not be called real sins. This interpretation implies a distinction between the Hebrew words translated *iniquity* and *sin*, which cannot be traced in the rest of the Old Testament. Besides, the rendering takes considerable liberty with the Hebrew and makes the transition from 8 to 9 very abrupt. A much better connection and more satisfactory sense is had if in 8b the reading of LXX. is followed, which requires only very slight changes in the Hebrew. Then the whole of verse 8 will read, "Ephraim indeed said, Surely I am become rich, I have found wealth; but"—now follows Jehovah's reply to this boast—"all his gains are not sufficient for (to expiate) the guilt which he has incurred." This translation makes the transition to verse 9 quite natural, for the latter supplies the reason for the doom of Israel implied in 8b, and at the same time makes a more distinct announcement of the judgment. **And** ["But"]—A more common translation of the Hebrew is "for," which is to be preferred here if in 8b the LXX. reading is accepted. **Thy God from the land of Egypt**—These words may suggest several thoughts: (1) All they are and all they have they owe to him; therefore their ingratitude is the more culpable. (2) Since he is the source of every good gift, violence and fraud are not the proper means by which to acquire wealth. (3) Jehovah has proved himself a faithful helper and friend since the days in Egypt, but he has also shown himself ready to punish whenever punishment was needed (Amos iv, 6ff.; iii, 2). He may punish again. The last thought is most prominent in the mind of the prophet. **Will yet**—R. V., "I will yet again make thee to dwell in tents"; A. V., "tabernacles." A. V. regards this evidently as a promise, but in this connection the words must be taken as a threat (compare ii, 14). Jehovah will drive them from their comfortable homes and their ill-gotten riches; they will be led back into the desert (see on ii, 14), there to live in tents, as during their former wearisome wanderings. **The solemn feast**—Better, simply *feast*, or, *festal season* (see on ix, 5). The reference is to one of the three ancient feasts of the Hebrews, the Feast of Tabernacles (Exod. xxiii, 16; compare Lev. xxiii, 42, 43). This was a season of gratitude and rejoicing, but of this the prophet does not think. The tent dwelling is the only point of comparison.

It is exceedingly difficult to trace the logical connection between the remaining verses of chapter xii. Most recent commentators agree with G. A. Smith, who says, concerning verses 10, 11, "One does not see the connection of these verses with the preceding," and concerning verses 12–14, "I cannot trace the argument here." A few attempts have been made to discover the underlying connection, but all must admit that more or less uncertainty remains. Numerous attempts have been made to remove the difficulties by omissions, transpositions, and alterations of the text. Some of these result in a smoother text, but one cannot feel confident that they have restored the words of Hosea. Taking the text as it stands, the line of argument seems to be this: In verse 9 the prophet announces doom; in 10 he points out that Je-

en by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, [7]by the ministry of the prophets. **11** [q]*Is there* iniquity *in* Gilead? surely they are vanity: they sacrifice

[7] Heb. *by the hand.*—[q] Chaps. 5. 1; 6. 8. —[r] Chaps. 4. 15; 9. 15; Amos 4. 4; 5. 5.

bullocks in [r]Gilgal; yea, [s]their altars *are* as heaps in the furrows of the fields. **12** And Jacob [t]fled into the country of Syria, and Israel [u]served for a wife, and for a wife he kept

[s] Chaps. 8. 11; 10. 1.—[t] Gen. 28. 5; Deut. 26. 5.—[u] Gen. 29. 20, 28.

hovah has made repeated attempts through the prophets to avert it. Verse 11 is obscure. The prophet apparently singles out two prominent religious centers, and, speaking of their destruction, he desires to impress upon the people the truth that no one can be blamed for the disaster but they themselves; verses 12–14 present a new indictment and a new announcement of judgment. By a comparison of the experiences of the nation with those of the patriarch Jacob in Aram the prophet seeks to show what great things Jehovah has done for Israel, and how the divine love has been met with ingratitude. Again and again they have roused the divine anger; therefore the sentence must stand.

10, 11. In manifold ways Jehovah sought to warn the people. **By the prophets**—This is better than R. V. "unto" (compare Amos ii, 11; Jer. vii, 25). **Visions**—One of the means whereby the prophets received divine revelations (Num. xii, 6; see on Obad. 1). (Compare the articles "Vision" and "Prophecy and Prophets" in Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible.*) **Similitudes**—Literally, *I have made comparisons*, that is, have spoken in similes and parables (vii, 4ff.; ix, 10; compare Isa. v, 1–7). To all these warnings Israel remained deaf; the result is ruin, and no one but Israel is to blame. **Gilead**—See on vi, 8. **Gilgal**—See on iv, 15. Both were religious centers; both were seats of corruption; and both will be destroyed for their sins. It has been claimed sometimes that the two centers are intended to represent the entire kingdom—Gilead the territory east of the Jordan, Gilgal the territory west of that river. Whether this is so or not, the fate of the two cities will be the fate of the entire nation. **Is there iniquity in Gilead**—R. V., "Is Gilead iniquity?" **Surely they are vanity**—R. V., "they are altogether false." Neither translation reproduces the sense of the original, which should be rendered, "If Gilead is worthless (that is, morally), nothing but vanity (nothingness) shall they (the Gileadites) become." Those who disregard Jehovah's warnings and remain moral and religious apostates can expect nothing but utter destruction. In a similar manner Gilgal must reap that which it has sown. **Sacrifice bullocks.** "*Bullocks* marks the sumptuousness of offerings." That this passage proves that "the sacrificing of bullocks at Gilgal must have seemed to the prophet wrong in itself" is at least doubtful (see Introduction, p. 32f.). It is quite conceivable that he condemned Gilgal and its worship only because of the corruption prevalent there (iv, 11ff.; ix, 15). **Are as heaps**—The tense is the *prophetic* perfect, equivalent to "shall be." **Heaps**—Heaps of stones piled up in the fields, which are entirely worthless. In the original there are two plays upon words: between *Gilgal* (Heap-town) and *heaps*, and between *sacrifice* and *altars*.

Verses 12, 13 present a contrast between the fortunes of the patriarch Jacob and those of the nation Israel. The latter experienced wonderful manifestations of the divine mercy. **Jacob fled into the country of Syria** ["field (territory) of Aram"]—Which to him was a strange country (Gen. xxvii, 43). On the other hand, Israel was delivered from a strange country and restored to the land of its forefathers (13). **Israel served**—The patriarch Jacob, here called Israel (Gen.

sheep. **13** [x]And by a prophet the LORD brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved. **14** [y]Ephraim provoked *him* to anger [8]most bitterly: therefore shall he leave his [9]blood upon him, [z]and his [a]reproach shall his Lord return unto him.

[x] Exod. 12. 50, 51; 13. 3; Psa. 77. 20; Isa. 63. 11; Mic. 6. 4.—[y] 2 Kings 17. 11–18.

[8] Heb. *with bitternesses.*—[9] Heb. *bloods;* see Ezek. 18. 13; 24. 7, 8.—[z] Dan. 11. 18.—[a] Deut. 28. 37.

xxxii, 28), had to render service; the nation, on the contrary, was freed from servitude and bondage. **Kept sheep**—Jacob had to endure the hardships of a shepherd's life; Israel was the flock under the tender care of a loving shepherd. **For a wife**—Gen. xxix, 18–20. Though this may have been an adequate reward, it is insignificant when compared with the countless blessings held out to Israel by Jehovah. **By a prophet**—Moses (compare Deut. xxxiv, 10); and from the time of Moses Jehovah continued to raise up prophets to exercise a shepherd's care over Israel (Amos ii, 11).

14. Surely Jehovah was justified in expecting gratitude; but he was disappointed. **Ephraim**—Israel (13). **Provoked . . . to anger**—By its lack of gratitude and open rebellion. The anger of Jehovah is one phase of his holiness, which manifests itself in intense love for everything that is pure and good and in intense hatred for everything that is impure and bad. **Blood**—Bloodguiltiness (G.-K., 124n). **Shall he leave**—R. V., "shall . . . be left." The Hebrew verb is even stronger, "shall be thrust upon him." Under no consideration will it be removed, and being left upon the criminal it will surely bring punishment. **His reproach**—Or, *insult;* the dishonor heaped upon Jehovah by the sin and rebellion of Ephraim (Isa. lxv, 7). **Unto him**—Ephraim. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

CHAPTER XIII.

ISRAEL'S GLORY TURNED TO SHAME, 1–16.

The beginning of a new discourse, which, according to G. A. Smith, "has

WHEN Ephraim spake trembling, he exalted himself in Is-

every mark of being Hosea's latest." Whether or not this is so, it is one of the most powerful and comprehensive in the book. It opens with a reference to the tribe of Ephraim, which in the beginning occupied a position of prominence in the nation but when it apostatized from Jehovah signed its own death warrant (1). From this well-known example Israel should have learned its lesson, but it failed to do so; it persisted in shameless idolatry, therefore it will vanish like chaff before the whirlwind (2, 3). The rebellious attitude of Israel, the prophet continues, is unintelligible, since the God whom they have rejected is the God who led them from the time of the Exodus. Strange to say, the more Jehovah prospered them the more arrogant they became, the more forgetful of Jehovah; hence he will devour them like a lion (4–8). By rebelling against Jehovah Israel courted destruction, which is now inevitable. No one can prevent it, Jehovah himself can show mercy no longer (9–14). The discourse closes with a threat of utter destruction (15, 16).

1–3. *Israel's apostasy its own death warrant.* Though the interpretation of verse 1 is not quite certain, that embodied in the translation of R. V. and suggested in the introductory remarks above is preferable to all others that have been proposed. Ephraim's experience should have been a warning to the whole people. **Ephraim**—Not synonymous with Israel, as in practically every other case in the book, but the tribe of Ephraim. **When . . . spake trembling, he exalted himself**—If rendered thus the meaning of the passage would be, "When the Ephraimites in trembling accents

rael; but [a]when he offended in Baal, he died. 2 And now [1]they sin more and more, and [b]have made them molten images of their silver, *and*

[a] 2 Kings 17. 16, 18; chap. 11. 2.—[1] Heb. *they add to sin.*—[b] Chaps. 2. 8; 8. 4.

idols according to their own understanding, all of it the work of the craftsmen: they say of them, Let [c]the men that sacrifice [c]kiss the

[2] Or, *the sacrificers of men.*—[c] 1 Kings 19. 18.

responded to the divine call, they rose to the exalted position which their prophetic ancestor foreshadowed" (Gen. xlix, 22–26). This translation and interpretation are open to criticism on linguistic and other grounds, and there can be no doubt that R. V. has come nearer the truth: "When Ephraim spake, there was trembling." The other tribes looked up to Ephraim with fear and trembling (Judg. viii, 1; xii, 1; compare Gen. xlix, 16; Deut. xxxiii, 17). **He exalted himself**—Not in a bad sense, "he became proud," but, "he became a leader, a prince." Many commentators read, with a slight alteration, "he was a prince." **He died**—Loyalty to Jehovah contained elements insuring permanence; apostasy, on the other hand, contained those elements that made death and destruction inevitable (Hab. ii, 4). As soon as Ephraim apostatized the dying process began (Gen. ii, 17). **He offended in Baal**—Or, *became guilty through the Baal* (compare x, 2). He became guilty when he accepted from the Canaanites Baal ideas and allowed these to corrupt the Jehovah worship (ii, 5ff.). *Baal* is identical with *Baals* in other parts of the book (see on ii, 5). There may be also an allusion to the setting up of the "calves" (viii, 5; x, 5) by Jeroboam I (1 Kings xii, 29), who was of the tribe of Ephraim (1 Kings xi, 26). The tribe of Ephraim, once so powerful, had become, in the days of Hosea, of little significance. The words of the prophet by no means imply that Ephraim alone was guilty, or that he alone suffered; only, in his experience the contrast between the former glory and the present oblivion illustrated most perfectly the lesson Hosea desired to teach. The experience of this one tribe should have had a wholesome effect upon the others. Not so. **Now**—In the prophet's own day. **They**—The whole nation. **Sin more and more**—Or, *they continue to sin* (G.-K., 114m) notwithstanding the warnings.

The offense of Ephraim consisted in apostasy to the Baals; the nation as a whole gave itself to even grosser idolatry. **Molten images**—See on Nah. i, 14 (compare Exod. xxxiv, 17). These images may have been intended primarily to be representations of Jehovah (1 Kings xii, 28). **Idols**—The general term for an image of a deity. **According to their own understanding**—Their own skill and proficiency. What power can there be in such images? LXX. reads, and other ancient versions, in part, favor the reading, "They made them molten images of their silver according to the likeness of idols." **The work of the craftsmen**—Whatever the exact reading of the preceding, this clause brings out the point of greatest importance: the images are man-made; there is nothing divine about them.

2b is obscure. Various translations, all more or less forced, have been proposed. The text may be corrupt; at any rate, many emendations have been suggested. **They**—The indefinite *people.* **Say of them**—Or, *concerning them,* that is, the idols. **Let the men that sacrifice kiss the calves**—The kiss is the kiss of homage (Psa. ii, 12; 1 Kings xix, 18). Those who offer sacrifice are urged ironically to bestow the kiss of homage upon the idolatrous calves. How absurd for human beings to kiss calves! Another possible translation is suggested in the margin, "Let the sacrificers of men kiss the calves." This rendering emphasizes even more the absurdity of the religious practices. Men they sacrifice and beasts they kiss, instead of sacrificing beasts

calves. 3 Therefore they shall be [d]as the morning cloud, and as the early dew that passeth away, [e]as the chaff *that* is driven with the whirlwind out of the floor, and as the smoke out of the chimney. 4 Yet [f]I *am* the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but me: for [g]*there is* no saviour beside me.

5 [h]I did know thee in the wilderness, [i]in the land of [3]great drought.

[d] Chap. 6. 4.—[e] Dan. 2.35.—[f] Isa. 43. 11; chap. 12. 9.—[g] Isa.43. 11; 45. 21.

[h] Deut. 2. 7; 32. 10.—[i] Deut. 8. 15; 32. 10.—[3] Heb. *droughts.*

and kissing men. That human sacrifices were offered in Israel at this time is not definitely stated in Hosea (but compare 2 Kings xvii, 17); in Judah the practice was not unknown (2 Kings xvi, 3; xxi, 6). A third possible translation, secured by dividing the words into two clauses, reads, "To them (the idols) they speak (in prayer)." How absurd to address prayers to the work of their own hands! "Men that sacrifice (or, sacrificers of men) kiss the calves." *Sacrificers of men* is the more natural translation of the Hebrew, but the other is not impossible (G.-K., 128l). The two clauses would have to be understood as exclamations of disgust by the prophet. Which one of these interpretations is right cannot be asserted with certainty. The Hebrew is peculiar and may be corrupt. Of proposed emendations two may be mentioned. Marti, omitting several words, reads, "Sacrificers of men they are; calves they kiss." Harper, "People sacrificing to demons; men kissing calves."

Such a condition of affairs cannot be permitted to continue. 3. Swift retribution will overtake them. This thought is expressed very emphatically by the accumulation of four separate figures, each one describing utter destruction. On the first two see vi, 4. **As the chaff**—The threshing floors were usually located on elevations, so as to take advantage of every breeze. The grain was winnowed by throwing it up into the air with shovels. The solid grains fell back to the ground, while the chaff was carried away by the wind. The stronger the wind the more quickly the chaff vanished; a whirlwind would drive it out of sight in a very short time (Psa. i, 4; Isa. xvii, 13; xli, 15, 16, etc.). **Smoke**—It also is swiftly driven away by the breeze (Psa. lxviii, 2). **Chimney**—The same word is sometimes rendered "window"; literally, *lattice* (see on Joel ii, 9).

4–8. *Love — Ingratitude — Destruction.* The conduct of Israel was the more shocking because Jehovah had always proved himself ready to be their helper and friend. **I am Jehovah**—Here the emphasis is upon the assistance rendered by Jehovah to Israel throughout their entire history (compare xii, 9). **Thou shalt know**—Better, R. V. margin, "knowest." The prophet appeals to present and past experiences. **No god but me**—Israel found no god able to help and to save besides the one who delivered them out of Egypt; the entire history revealed him and him alone as saviour and friend. Indeed, there is no other deliverer. How serious has been the mistake of the people (ii, 5ff.).

5. The loving care of Jehovah manifested itself in a special manner during the wanderings in the desert, when hunger and thirst threatened to destroy them. **I did know**—The Hebrew is more emphatic: "It was *I* (not some other god) who knew thee." See on viii, 4; here in a favorable sense—care, protect (Psa. i, 6). Some of the ancient versions read, "I shepherded thee," which is in accord with the figure in verse 6. **Land of great drought**—Or, *of burning thirst* (Deut. viii, 15; Exod. xvii, 1ff.; etc.).

6. Jehovah's care for Israel and the resulting prosperity failed to inspire gratitude; on the contrary, it made the people proud and arrogant and caused them to forget God. **Accord-**

6 [k]According to their pasture, so were they filled; they were filled, and their heart was exalted; therefore [l]have they forgotten me. 7 Therefore [m]I will be unto them as a lion: as [n]a leopard by the way will I observe *them:* 8 I will meet them [o]as a bear *that is* bereaved *of her whelps*, and will rend the caul of their heart, and there will I devour them like a lion: [4]the wild beast shall tear them.

9 O Israel, [p]thou hast destroyed thyself; [q]but in me [5]*is* thine help.

[k] Deut. 8. 12, 14; 32. 15.——[l] Chap. 8. 14.——[m] Lam. 3. 10; chap. 5. 14.——[n] Jer. 5. 6.——[o] 2 Sam. 17. 8; Prov. 17. 12.——[4] Heb. *the beast of the field.*——[p] Prov. 6. 32; chap. 14. 1; Mal. 1. 9.——[q] Verse 4.——[5] Heb. *in thy help.*

ing to their pasture—The rich blessings bestowed upon them. **They were filled**—With prosperity; but they failed to recognize the giver (ii, 8; iv, 7; x, 1; compare Deut. viii, 11ff.; xxxi, 20, etc.). The verb is repeated for the sake of emphasis. It is possible, however, that the two verb forms, with a slight change in the second, should be combined to form one expression, "They were completely filled." **Their heart was exalted**—Prosperity caused pride and arrogance. **Forgotten me**—Arrogance led to forgetfulness of God (viii, 14; Isa. xvii, 10); they felt that they could get along without the divine help.

7, 8. The flock, Israel, despised the good shepherd; now he will transform himself into a beast of prey seeking to devour the sheep. **Lion**—See on v, 14. **Leopard**—Mentioned on account of its fierceness (compare Isa. xi, 6). Leopards are still found in Mount Lebanon, though in small numbers. **Will I observe them**—R. V., "will I watch by the way," waiting for the proper moment to spring. "It (the leopard) is specially noted for the patience with which it waits . . . expecting its prey, upon which it springs with deadly precision" (compare Jer. v, 6). Several of the ancient versions and some of the Hebrew manuscripts read, "in the way to Assyria" (v, 13; vii, 12). This would require only a slight change, but the other is to be preferred. **Bear**—When the country was covered with more abundant forests than at present bears were more numerous in Palestine; they are still quite numerous in the wilder regions of the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, rarer in the mountains east of the Jordan, and very rare in western Palestine (compare Lam. iii, 10; Van Lennep, *Bible Lands*, 259ff.). **Bereaved of her whelps**—And therefore even more ferocious than usual (2 Sam. xvii, 8; Prov. xvii, 12). **The caul of their heart**—Literally, *the inclosure of the heart.* In popular language probably equivalent to *breast.* **There**—In the very spot where he seizes the prey. There will be no delay. **Like a lion**—R. V., "lioness." It is difficult to distinguish between the different words for *lion* used in Hebrew; the one used here is thought to denote the female, but this is not beyond question. **The wild beast shall tear them**—The beasts will assist Jehovah in despoiling Israel. "The end of the verse suggests a battlefield, where beasts of prey attack the corpses as the last avengers of God." Certainly the whole is to be understood as a figurative description of the judgment about to fall.

Utter destruction the just punishment for Israel's guilt, 9–16.

This discourse closes with another description of the hopelessness of Israel's condition. It has rebelled against Jehovah, who alone can save; therefore destruction has become inevitable; it has already begun and will not stop until the whole nation has been consumed. **O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thy help**—This is one of the most abrupt sentences in the book of Hosea. On the assumption that the text is correct the abruptness has been explained as due to the profound emotion of the prophet, which caused him to break off before completing his

10 [e]I will be thy king: [r]where *is any other* that may save thee in all thy cities? and thy judges of whom [s]thou saidst, Give me a king and princes? **11** [t]I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took *him* away in my wrath. **12** [u]The iniquity of Ephraim *is* bound up; his sin *is* hid.

[e] Rather, *Where is thy king?* King Hoshea being then in prison, 2 Kings 17. 4. —[r] Verse 4; Deut. 32.38; chap. 10. 3.

[s] 1 Sam. 8. 5, 19.—[t] 1 Sam. 8. 7; 10. 19; 15. 22, 23; 16. 1; chap. 10. 3.—[u] Deut. 32. 34; Job 14. 17.

thought. A more satisfactory rendering of the Hebrew—though several words must be supplied in the English—and in more complete accord with the context, is that of R. V.: "It is thy destruction, O Israel, that thou art against me, against thy help"; that is, by rebelling against Jehovah Israel signed its own death warrant. LXX. and Peshitto present a reading which removes in some measure the unusually elliptical character of the sentence, and adds strength to the utterance. Both read the latter part as a question: "who will be thy help?" In addition Peshitto reads the first part, "I have (a *prophetic* perfect) destroyed thee." Following these translations, the whole verse may be read, "I am," or, "he is," "thy destruction; yea, who shall be thy helper?" This question connects naturally with verse 10. Neither king nor princes can save. Here again R. V. is to be preferred: "Where now is thy king, that he may save thee in all thy cities?" According to x, 14; xi, 6, the destruction will fall upon the fortresses and cities; in their distress they will need and cry for help, but in vain. The king will be powerless against the wrath of Jehovah. Verse 11 goes even further and states that the king will be entirely removed. **Thy judges**—Equivalent to "rulers," as in vii, 7, including "king and princes" mentioned in the last line. The second question is practically equivalent to the first. **Princes**—See on iii, 4. **Give me**—Some commentators see here a reference to the demands for a king in the days of Samuel (1 Sam. viii, 5ff.). It is more probable, however, that the prophet has in mind more recent events, when the people by actions rather than by word of mouth expressed their demands for new kings and placed them upon the throne (vii, 3ff.; viii, 4). When the calamity falls it will be seen how helpless is the king in whom they place their confidence.

The tenses in verse 11 are *frequentatives*. Jehovah did it on more than one occasion, and he is still doing it. In vii, 7, and viii, 4, the prophet speaks of the frequent changes in dynasties as having been brought about by violence and assassination. This was done without consulting Jehovah and without his approval. In this verse the prophet considers the same events from a different viewpoint. He makes the additional statement that, though Jehovah was not consulted, the changes could not be made without his consent and coöperation. In one sense, therefore, the people made the kings, in another, Jehovah gave them. "God humored them; but these kings who were wrung from him (viii, 4) he gave them in anger; they were not kings by God's grace, but by his displeasure." As he gave them, so he took them away; and the anarchy and disorder following were equally due to his wrath (Isa. ix, 18ff.).

Verses 12–16 do not contain a promise, as is sometimes asserted, but an additional threat. Bad as is the present confusion, severer judgments are yet to come. **Ephraim**—The northern kingdom. **Iniquity . . . sin**—Synonyms. **Bound up . . . hid**—R. V., "laid up in store"—Also synonymous expressions. The case is closed, all the evidence is in, and carefully preserved. Nothing will be overlooked on the day of reckoning. With this record of iniquity before him, what can Jehovah do but allow justice to have its way? **Sorrows**

13 [x]The sorrows of a travailing woman shall come upon him: he *is* [y]an unwise son; for he should not [z]stay [7]long in *the place of* the breaking forth of children. 14 [a]I will ransom them from [8]the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: [b]O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: [c]repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.

[x] Isa. 13. 8; Jer. 30. 6.—[y] Prov. 22. 3.—[z] 2 Kings 19. 3.—[7] Heb. *a time.*—[a] Isa. 25. 8; Ezek. 37. 12.—[8] Heb. *the hand.*

[b] 1 Cor. 15. 54, 55.—[c] Jer. 15. 6; Rom. 11. 29.

(better, *pangs*) **of a travailing woman**—A common figure of extreme anguish and distress (Mic. iv, 9; Isa. xiii, 8; xxi, 3, etc.). Ephraim is likened to the mother who is in the pangs of childbirth, but unable to bring forth and thus to put an end to the suffering. In the very next line the prophet changes the figure and likens Ephraim to the child about to be born. His folly is delaying the birth and is responsible for the continued suffering. Again and again the prophet shows that, whatever calamity may come, Israel alone is to blame for it. **Unwise**—Though aware of his duty in the matter, he failed to do his part. The exact translation of 13b is uncertain: **For he should not stay long in the place of the breaking forth of children**—R. V., "for it is time he should not tarry in the place . . . "; margin, "when it is time, he standeth not in . . . " It may be difficult to decide between these and similar translations suggested, but the point of the argument is easily seen. Ephraim prevented the birth at the proper moment, either by not presenting himself for birth at the proper time or by retarding the process. By his attitude he increased the pain and endangered the life of both mother and child, in this figure one and the same person. Applied to the history of Israel, the figure illustrates the folly of the people, manifesting itself in their failure to heed the warnings and exhortations of the prophets. The latter pictured the possibilities of a new life, and set forth the manner of entering into it; but Israel stubbornly refused to enter in, and thus came to the very verge of destruction.

Death seems inevitable unless a skillful physician can be secured. In Israel's crisis Jehovah alone can bring relief. Will he interfere? Verse 14 supplies the answer. This verse has received all kinds of interpretations. Broadly speaking, the different views may be grouped under two heads: (1) those interpreting verse 14 as a promise; (2) those interpreting it as a threat, continuing the threats of verses 9–13. The former interpretation finds its chief support in the use made of the passage in 1 Cor. xv, 55. But New Testament usage does not decide finally the primary meaning of an Old Testament passage (compare xi, 1, with Matt. ii, 15); and there can be no doubt that the demands of the language and of the context are best satisfied by the second interpretation. If this interpretation is accepted, 14a as well as 14b must be read as a question. With either interpretation the translation of 14b in R. V. is to be accepted instead of A. V. If the interpretation of verse 14 as a threat is correct the verse must be translated, "Shall I ransom them from the power of Sheol? Shall I redeem them from death? O death, where are thy plagues? O Sheol, where is thy destruction? repentance shall be hid from mine eyes." The first two are rhetorical questions. Ephraim had endangered his life in spite of the physician's advice. Shall Jehovah now rescue him from impending death? The answer is an emphatic *No!* He rather encourages death and Sheol to do their worst. **I will be thy plagues; . . . I will be thy destruction**—Better, R. V., "Where are thy plagues? . . . where is thy destruction?" Bring them hither! You shall have unhindered sway. **Repentance shall be hid**—I will show no compassion (Amos

15 Though [d]he be fruitful among *his* brethren, [e]an east wind shall come, the wind of the LORD shall come up from the wilderness, and his spring shall become dry, and his fountain shall be dried up: he shall spoil the treasure of all [9]pleasant vessels. 16 [10]Samaria shall become desolate; [f]for she hath rebelled against her God: [g]they shall fall by

[d] See Gen. 41. 52; 48. 19.—[e] Jer. 4. 11; Ezek. 17. 10; 19. 12; chap. 4. 19.—[9] Heb. *vessels of desire*, Nah. 2. 9.

[10] 2 Kings 17. 6.—[f] 2 Kings 18. 12.—[g] 2 Kings 8. 12; 15. 16; Isa. 13. 16; chap. 10. 14, 15; Amos 1. 13; Nah. 3. 10.

vii, 8). Verses 15, 16 expand the threat of destruction.

The interpretation just suggested is certainly more in accord with the general argument of the prophet than that which sees in verse 14 a promise. The latter view, which is based upon the translation of R. V.—that of A. V. is universally admitted to be incorrect—assumes between verses 13 and 14 an abrupt change of sentiment; verse 13 pictures Ephraim at the point of death, but the divine father heart cannot endure the prospect of dissolution. His compassion is aroused, and in 14a he promises deliverance from death and Sheol. Having reached this decision, he turns to these powers and asks triumphantly, "Where are now your plagues and destruction?" They can do no more harm, since Jehovah has taken the part of Israel. The last clause is a promise that Jehovah will not change his mind concerning the promise just made. **Ransom . . . redeem**—Not simply *deliver*. Death is so certain of its victim that it will not let go without a ransom. **Grave**—Better, with R. V., "Sheol," the place of departed personalities (Hab. ii, 5; Isa. v, 14). Both Paul (1 Cor. xv, 55) and Hosea call upon death and Sheol to do their worst, but there is a difference between the two. Hosea is in earnest because he can see only darkness and gloom beyond. Not so Paul; he defies their powers because he was acquainted with Him who brought immortality to light.

15, 16. Whatever the prosperity in the past, whatever the condition in the present, the future has only destruction in store. **He**—Must be the entire nation. **Fruitful**—A play upon *Ephraim*, for its Hebrew equivalent and the original of *fruitful* are similar in sound (Gen. xlix, 22; Hos. viii, 9). **Among his brethren**—This translation requires that *he* be interpreted of the tribe Ephraim, *his brethren* being the other tribes; but the context makes this impossible. For this reason many modern commentators favor the reading, "among the reed grass" (Gen. xli, 2, 18), which is found in a few Hebrew manuscripts and was accepted as original by a few early Jewish scholars. The word translated *reed grass* is an Egyptian loan word; this fact and its similarity in Hebrew to the original for *brethren* may account for the confusion. Whether this reading is accepted or not, Israel is pictured as a flourishing plant with every prospect of bearing plentiful fruit. **East wind**—It will swiftly destroy the prospects (xii, 1). **Wind of Jehovah**—So called because Jehovah uses the wind as an instrument of judgment. **Spring . . . fountain**—From it the plant draws moisture and nourishment. In the case of Israel, the resources needed for success. If the reading "reed grass" is correct, it may be an allusion to Israel's dependence upon Egypt; at any rate, the "east wind" seems to be a figure of the Assyrian conqueror, who comes from the east (Isa. xxi, 1). That a foreign invasion is in the prophet's mind is made clear in the last clause of verse 15, which describes the calamity without the use of a figure. **He**—Emphatic in Hebrew. The enemy described as east wind. **All pleasant** ["goodly"] **vessels**—All articles of value (Nah. ii, 9; Jer. xxv, 34). Verse 16 (xiv, 1, in the Hebrew) is the final summing up. **Samaria**—The capital represents the whole nation. **Shall become desolate**—R. V.,

the sword: their infants shall be dashed in pieces, and their women with child shall be ripped up.

CHAPTER XIV.

O ISRAEL, [a]return unto the

[a] Chap. 12. 6; Joel 2. 13.—[b] Chap. 13. 9.

more correctly, "shall bear her guilt" (x, 2), which consists in rebellion against Jehovah (vii, 14; Isa. i, 2). **Shall fall by the sword**—Compare xi, 6. The most horrible cruelties of ancient warfare shall be visited upon them (x, 14; Amos i, 13; compare Psa. cxxxvii, 9; 2 Kings xv, 16). Indeed, a horrible fate is awaiting the apostate children of Jehovah.

CHAPTER XIV.

ISRAEL'S REPENTANCE—JEHOVAH'S PARDON, 1–9.

Aside from the question of authorship (see Introduction, p. 35ff.) chapter xiv presents several exegetical difficulties, especially in its latter part. Verse 9 stands by itself as an epilogue to the whole book. The author of this verse, who seems to look back over the fulfillment of Hosea's oracles, expresses the thought that whosoever desires to become wise and prudent should become acquainted with the Book of Hosea. From it he may learn that Jehovah's ways are right, and that the destinies of men are determined by their attitude toward the divine will. There is some uncertainty concerning the interpretation of verse 8, but the general thought of 1–8 is clear. The prophet exhorts Israel to return to Jehovah in humility and sorrow (1, 2a). He puts upon the lips of the Israelites words expressive of the deepest remorse, and of an earnest determination to remain forever loyal to Jehovah (2b, 3). To this penitent prayer Jehovah responds that he will graciously pardon, and shower upon the God-fearing people blessings hitherto unknown (4–8).

1. **Return**—Israel was an apostate; had gone after the Baals. To enjoy again the divine favor the people must return to their own God, Jehovah, in LORD thy God; [b]for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. 2 Take with you words, and turn to the LORD: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and [1]receive *us* graciously: so will we render the [c]calves

[1] Or, *give good.*—[c] Heb. 13. 15.

obedience and love (compare vi, 1; Joel ii, 12; Amos iv, 6ff.). Out of the Old Testament idea of a *return* to Jehovah grew the New Testament idea of conversion. **Jehovah thy God**—In view of their constant tendency to run after other gods (ii, 5; iv, 12, etc.) they needed to be reminded again and again that Jehovah was their only legitimate God. **Hast fallen**—Or, *stumbled;* they were overtaken by calamity (iv, 5; v, 5) as a result of their sin.

2. The Israelites were all familiar with the command, "None shall appear before me empty" (Exod. xxiii, 15; xxxiv, 20), and they brought to Jehovah manifold gifts and offerings (v, 6; Amos v, 21ff.; Isa. i, 11ff.), but for these Jehovah did not care. This Hosea had already made plain (see on vi, 6); now he proceeds to give instruction concerning the things which will be acceptable to Jehovah. **Words**—Not meaningless phrases, but words expressing sincere repentance, such as he puts into their mouths in 2b, 3. **Take away**—It is natural that the prayer should begin with a petition for forgiveness (compare Mic. vii, 18, 19; Psa. li, 9). Hebrew, "Do thou *completely* take away," so that it shall be remembered no more. **Receive us graciously**—R. V., "accept that which is good." Literally, *take good;* which may mean either, "Take *and use* that which is good," that is, thy mercy, "and receive us again into thy favor" (so A. V.), or "Do thou take (accept) from us the only good we can offer, namely, words of supplication and repentance" (so R. V.). The expression is peculiar. If the text is correct the second is a more natural interpretation of the Hebrew, though the first would seem to give a more acceptable sense. **So will we render the calves of**

of our lips. 3 [d]Asshur shall not save us; [e]we will not ride upon horses: [f]neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, *Ye are* our gods: [g]for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy.

4 I will heal [h]their backsliding, I will love them [i]freely: for mine anger

[d] Jer. 31. 18, etc.; chaps. 5. 13; 12. 1. —[e] Deut. 17. 16; Psa. 33. 17; Isa. 30. 2, 16; 31. 1. —[f] Verse 8; chap. 2. 17. —[g] Psa. 10. 14; 68. 5. —[h] Jer. 5. 6; 14. 7; chap. 11. 7. —[i] Eph. 1. 6.

our lips—R. V., "So will we render *as* bullocks *the offering of* our lips." The translation of A. V. disregards Hebrew grammar. R. V., as the italics indicate, attempts to remove the difficulty by giving a paraphrase rather than a translation. The thought implied in the latter is that the Hebrews, having learned their bitter lesson, will offer no longer bullocks of the herd, which are not acceptable (vi, 6), but will substitute, as sacrificial animals, words of penitence and prayer (Psa. li, 16, 17; lxix, 30, 31). The expression itself is so peculiar, however, that many doubt the correctness of the text. LXX. reads, "We will render the *fruit* of our lips," and this is generally accepted as the original (compare Isa. lvii, 19). The "fruit of the lips" are the confessions, petitions, and promises of loyalty contained in verse 3. The whole prayer in 2b may be rendered, "If thou wilt completely take away iniquity, and if thou wilt receive the (only) good (we can offer), then we will render the fruit of our lips." Following these words Harper reads the last clause of verse 3, "For in thee the fatherless findeth mercy," as supplying the ground for the confidence underlying the promise in the last clause of verse 2. This transposition is proposed not so much because it improves the thought as because the strophic arrangement demands it.

3. Israel promises also to abstain from the very sins condemned so strongly and persistently by Hosea: (1) Trust in Assyria (v, 13; vii, 11; viii, 9; xii, 1); (2) reliance upon horses—Human defenses (i, 7; x, 13). There may be implied a promise to cease trusting in Egypt, since Egypt furnished horses to Israel (1 Kings x, 28; Ezek. xvii, 15; compare Isa. xxx, 16; xxxi, 1). (3) **The work of our hands**—Idols (viii, 4). These they will no longer regard as gods (compare xiii, 2). Cheyne sees in the expression "the work of our hands" "an early anticipation of the splendid morsels of irony in which a later prophet lashes idolatry" (Isa. xlii, 17; xliv, 9ff.). **In thee the fatherless findeth mercy**—Is to be connected with all the clauses, but especially with the last one. Neither foreign alliances, nor human defenses, nor man-made idols can help. Jehovah alone is always willing and able to show mercy and loving-kindness.

4–8. The sentiments expressed in xiv, 1–3, are essentially different from those expressed in vi, 1–3. The latter were superficial; to them Jehovah could give no favorable response; the prayer in xiv, 2, 3, gives evidence of Israel's sincerity; to it he responds with the promise of gracious redemption. The response is not addressed directly to Israel, but to the prophet; the former is referred to in the third person. **Heal**—The people's condition is likened to a disease which requires the presence of a physician (vi, 1). **Backsliding**—In vi, 1, the people express the hope that Jehovah will heal, not their sin, but the damage caused by sin. Some commentators see in xiv, 4a, a reference to this expectation that Jehovah will restore their prosperity. That Jehovah will heal all "the damage which their backsliding has brought upon them" is undoubtedly true (5–7), but Jehovah will do something more; he will remove the cause of the calamity —the spirit of apostasy which is responsible for the present hopeless condition (xi, 7; compare Jer. xxxi, 31–33). **Freely**—Spontaneously. They need not purchase his love as they purchased the favor of Assyria and Egypt. **Mine anger is turned**

is turned away from him. 5 I will be as [k]the dew unto Israel: he shall [2]grow as the lily, and [3]cast forth his roots as Lebanon. 6 His branches [4]shall spread, and [l]his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and [m]his smell as Lebanon. 7 [n]They that dwell under his shadow shall

[k] Job 29. 19; Prov. 19. 12.—[2] Or, *blossom.*—[3] Heb. *strike.*—[4] Heb. *shall go.*

[l] Psa. 52. 8; 128. 3—[m] Gen. 27. 27; Cant. 4. 11.—[n] Psa. 91. 1.

away—The change of attitude on the part of Israel has made it possible for Jehovah to manifest himself again in love and mercy (xii, 14). 4b belongs really to verse 5, and not to 4a. The two clauses in 4a form a complete parallelism, similarly 4b and 5a form a parallelism. Because Jehovah's anger is turned away he will be as dew unto Israel. The disease healed, the ruins of the past removed, a life of prosperity and peace may begin; to it Jehovah will give his blessing. **Dew**—"The dews of Syrian nights are excessive; on many mornings it looks as if there had been a heavy rain." This dew is of great importance in Palestine, since it is the only slackening of the drought which the country feels from May till October. In view of this fact it is only natural that dew should become a symbol of that which is refreshing, quickening, and invigorating (Psa. cxxxiii, 3). Jehovah will put new energy and life into Israel (compare Mic. v, 7). The figure of dew is used in vi, 4, with an entirely different meaning.

The following verses (5–7) describe under various figures the splendor of the temporal and spiritual prosperity of the regenerated people. **Grow as the lily**—R. V., "blossom." The figure suggests beauty (Song of Songs, ii, 1, 2; Matt. vi, 28, 29) and stateliness; perhaps also rapidity of multiplication. Pliny states that the lily is unsurpassed in its fecundity, one single root often producing fifty bulbs. **Cast forth**—That they may strike far and deep. **His roots as Lebanon**—Mountains are represented as having roots (Job xxviii, 9); therefore the comparison may be with Lebanon itself, or the prophet may think of the cedars of Lebanon. In either case it is a figure of stability. **His branches**—Better, *his saplings* (compare Isa. liii, 2, "tender plant"); the shoots that spring up from the roots around the parent stem. **Shall spread**—Israel is not to be a single tree, but a whole garden. **As the olive tree**—The olive tree ranks high for its beauty. It is an evergreen, and its leaves have a beautiful appearance; the "arrangement of colors makes an olive tree at a little distance appear as if covered with a filmy veil of silver gauze, which gives a soft dreamy sheen to the landscape (Jer. xi, 16)." The additional thought of serviceableness may be implied (see on Joel i, 10). **His smell as Lebanon**—Lebanon is rendered fragrant by its cedars and aromatic shrubs (Song of Songs, iv, 11). A figure of the delight with which God and man will look upon Israel.

The interpretation of verse 7 is uncertain. Most modern commentators consider the text corrupt and attempt emendations. The English translations do not reproduce the Hebrew correctly. If the translation is changed, fairly good sense may be had from the present text; render: "They that dwell under his shadow shall again bring to life corn; they shall blossom as the vine." The mixed figures in the two clauses—namely, the representation of one and the same person, on the one hand, as cultivating corn, on the other hand, as flourishing like a vine—are thought by some to constitute a serious objection to the correctness of the Hebrew text, but this is not conclusive; even Isaiah is at times inconsistent in his use of figures (Isa. v, 24). **His shadow**—The shadow of Israel. **They that dwell**—The individual Israelites. The nation is pictured as a tree under whose shadow its members dwell. In a similar manner the mother, Israel, is distinguished from the children, the individual Israelites (ii, 2). **Revive**—

return; they shall revive *as* the corn, and [5]grow as the vine: the [6]scent thereof *shall be* as the wine of Lebanon. 8 Ephraim *shall say*, [o]What have I to do any more with idols? [p]I have heard *him*, and observed him: I *am* like a green fir tree. [q]From me is thy fruit found.

[5] Or, *blossom*——[6] Or, *memorial.*

[o] Verse 3.——[p] Jer. 31.18.——[q] James 1. 17.

Better, *bring to life*—a picture of abundant fertility and prosperity (x, 1; Psa. cxxviii, 3). **The scent thereof**—Of the vine, Israel. Literally, *his memorial*, or, *renown.* **The wine of Lebanon**—Even Pliny speaks of the excellence of this wine; and more recent travelers praise it very highly (Ezek. xxvii, 18). G. A. Smith and others do not consider verse 7 a continuation of Jehovah's promises in verses 5, 6, but an utterance of the prophet. The former reads, following in part the LXX., "They (Israel) shall return and dwell in his (Jehovah's) shadow; they shall live well watered as a garden; till they flourish like a vine, and be fragrant like the wine of Lebanon."

8. **Ephraim shall say, What have I to do**—So Targum and Peshitto. R. V. margin reproduces the Hebrew more accurately, "O Ephraim, what have I to do." The question is spoken by Jehovah, not by Ephraim (Israel). Jehovah knows that he can supply every need of his people; why, he inquires, should idols be joined with him in worship? The rest of the verse presents a justification of Jehovah's claim to their whole-hearted service; he will supply all their needs. LXX. represents a slightly different text: "Ephraim, what hath *he* to do?" The answer implied is that he has nothing more to do with idols; he has entirely discarded them (verse 3). In view of Israel's conversion Jehovah will supply all their needs. LXX. may have preserved the original text. **I have heard**—R. V., "answered"—The pronoun is emphatic, *I on my part*, or *It is I who.* The tense is a *prophetic* perfect, though the perfect may be used to indicate that in the divine mind the change of attitude has already been determined upon. Jehovah will respond to Israel in the same spirit in which Israel approaches him (ii, 15, 21, 23; compare Isa. lxv, 24). **Observed**—R. V., "will regard," that is, with loving care and tenderness (Isa. viii, 17; Deut. xxxi, 7). **I am like a green fir tree**—The precise kind of tree in the mind of the prophet may be uncertain, but there can be no doubt that he is thinking of the splendid forests of Mount Lebanon. The pronoun is again emphatic. Who is the speaker? The preceding clauses are evidently placed in the mouth of Jehovah; so is the last clause of verse 8. It seems natural, therefore, to ascribe these words also to him. Under the figure of an evergreen tree he seeks to teach the people that his interest in their welfare is unchangeable; that the protection and shelter he offers them will continue forever. Against this interpretation it is urged that Jehovah is nowhere else likened to a tree, and that such comparison is alien to the spirit of prophecy (iv, 13; compare Isa. i, 29). Consequently the words are placed in the mouth of Israel as a "naive self-congratulation on the part of Israel." The last clause is interpreted as a reply by Jehovah, warning them not to boast in their prosperity, but to remember that Jehovah is the giver of every good and perfect gift. In favor of this view is the comparison of Israel with the forests of Lebanon (verse 5). The abrupt change in speakers, without indication of such a change, cannot be urged against this interpretation, for similar changes are found in other parts of the Old Testament (compare Psa. cxxxii). Some have gone so far as to make Jehovah speak twice and Israel twice, assigning lines 1 and 3 to Israel, lines 2 and 4 to Jehovah. But if line 3 is spoken by Israel, of itself, and line 4 by Jehovah, of Israel, it is strange that the

9 [r]Who *is* wise, and he shall understand these *things?* prudent, and he shall know them? for [s]the ways of the LORD *are* right: and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein.

[r] Psa. 107. 43; Jer. 9. 12; Dan. 12. 10; John 8. 47; 18. 37.

[s] Prov. 10. 29; Luke 2. 34; 2 Cor. 2. 16; 1 Pet. 2. 7, 8.

nation should be likened to two different kinds of trees in two successive clauses—to a fir tree and to a fruit tree. For this reason it may be better to assign the whole of verse 8 to Jehovah, and regard it as a continuation of the divine promises to Israel. **From me is thy fruit found**—All the fruitfulness and prosperity of Israel comes from Jehovah. There may be in the original a play upon the name Ephraim, as in xiii, 15.

With verse 8 closes the direct prophetic message. Verse 9 is the epilogue, summoning the people to lay to heart the lessons of the Book of Hosea. This epilogue is similar in import to the words of Jesus, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Matt. xi, 15; xiii, 9, etc.). Because of its similarity in tone and language with the Wisdom Literature, the fact that the appeal seems to presuppose the fulfillment of Hosea's oracles, and the lack of similarity with Hosea's style, scholars are agreed almost universally in declaring the verse a later addition by some prophetic spirit who lived at a time and in surroundings which called for a message similar to that of Hosea. Whether Hosea is the author or not the meaning remains the same, but neither A. V. nor R. V. makes this meaning very clear. Both translations emphasize the difficulties presented by the divine providence as set forth by Hosea; few, if any, can comprehend them. Nevertheless, the author insists, they are straight, leading the faithful to life, the transgressor to destruction. While this interpretation brings out an important truth, it does not seem to touch the real thought of verse 9. This thought becomes plain if 9a is rendered as follows: "Whosoever is wise, let him understand these things; (whosoever is) prudent, let him know them." **Wise**—A very common word in the Wisdom Literature; a wise person is one who knows and does what is right and proper or is anxious to do the same; such a one is exhorted to **understand** and lay to heart. **These things**—The warnings, exhortations, promises, etc., contained in the Book of Hosea. The advice is enforced by a parallel appeal. Why? **For the ways of Jehovah are right**—There is no injustice in the acts of his providence (Psa. xix, 9; Deut. xxxii, 4). **Just**—He who is obedient to the divine will. **Transgressors**—The opposite of just; the man who is not obedient. The word *just* occurs nowhere else in Hosea. **Shall walk in them**—In the divine ways. To walk in God's ways is ordinarily to "conduct one's self in accordance with the divine will." If this is the meaning here the statement of the author becomes equivalent to "the obedient to the divine will are obedient." This is meaningless. To walk is in this verse equivalent to "to walk without encountering any obstacles." He who learns the divine will as taught in the Book of Hosea, and is obedient to the same, shall live continually a happy and prosperous life; but the man who does not profit by these lessons, the transgressor who is disobedient to the divine will, shall meet his fate. **Shall fall therein**—Shall come to utter ruin. Whatever the outcome, the ways of Divine Providence are right. To one they mean life, to another death. Which it will be is determined by the individual's attitude toward the will of God (1 Cor. i, 18; compare Prov. xi, 5).

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF JOEL.

The Prophet.

THE second book in the collection of the Minor Prophets is ascribed to Joel, the son of Pethuel (according to some of the ancient versions Bethuel or Bathuel). The Old Testament mentions thirteen other persons bearing the name Joel, but it is not probable that the prophet is to be identified with any one of these. The name signifies *Jehovah is God*—this etymology is undoubtedly the one accepted by the Jews—and, like the name Micah, contains a "brief confession of faith."

Of the personal history of Joel nothing is known beyond what may be gathered from the prophecy itself. His message centers around Jerusalem and Judah; and the manner in which he refers to the land and to the city, *Zion* (ii, 1, 15, 32; iii, 16, 17, 21), *the children of Zion* (ii, 23), *Judah and Jerusalem* (ii, 32; iii, 1, 16, 17, 18, 20), *the children of Judah and Jerusalem* (iii, 6, 8, 19), makes it probable that his home was in southern Palestine, perhaps in Jerusalem. He displays intimate acquaintance with the temple and its service, with the priests and their duties (i, 9, 13, 14, 16; ii, 14, 17); but it is not probable that he himself was a priest; the character of his references to the priests would indicate that he was not one of them.

Of Pethuel nothing is known. The name of the father was perhaps added to distinguish the prophet from the other men bearing the same name. The suggestion of Professor Cheyne, that Bethuel (the form of the name in some of the versions) is a corruption for Tubal, the name of a North Arabian tribe, has nothing in its favor.

Date of the Prophet.

Perhaps no other book in the Old Testament has been assigned to so many different dates as the Book of Joel. Even

during the nineteenth century, when investigation is supposed to have proceeded on scientific principles, scholars have differed regarding its date by a space of more than five centuries; in other words, the book has been dated as early as the reign of Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, that is, before 900 B. C. (Bunsen, Pearson), and as late as the fourth century B. C. In addition, it has been located in every century between these extreme dates.

There are especially two periods, however, around which the most earnest attempts to fix the date of Joel may be grouped: (1) The minority of King Joash, or Jehoash, of Judah, about 830 B. C. (2 Kings xi, xii). This date was first defended with great ability by Credner in 1831; he was followed by Ewald, Hitzig, Bleek, Delitzsch, Keil, and others. Among the more recent defenders of the early date are Kirkpatrick, Von Orelli, Beecher, Robertson, Sinker, Cameron, and, less positively, Baudissin. (2) On the other hand, an ever-increasing number of scholars favor a postexilic date. The first to propose a late date was Vatke, in 1835; he was followed by Hilgenfeld, in 1866, Duhm, in 1875, and since then the great majority of Old Testament scholars have declared in favor of the late date—among them Kuenen, A. B. Davidson, Driver, Wellhausen, Merx, W. R. Smith, Holzinger, Farrar, G. B. Gray, Kautzsch, Cornill, Wildeboer, G. A. Smith, Nowack, Briggs, Marti, R. W. Rogers, H. P. Smith, Bennett, W. R. Harper, and others. Two other attempts to determine the date of the Book of Joel should receive mention. E. Koenig places the activity of Joel near the close of the seventh century: "Unquestionable indications point to the seventh century, and probable (indications) to the last years of Josiah, or perhaps to those immediately following." Strack seems to favor this view, though he is not positive, and in one paragraph he speaks rather favorably of the theory about to be mentioned. J. W. Rothstein has attempted to prove that the Book of Joel is not a literary unit. He bases his argument chiefly upon the difference in the historical background which

a comparison of i, 1—ii, 27, with ii, 28—iii, 21, is said to bring to light. He points out that in the first part the state and the nation are pictured in healthy political condition. The only calamity mentioned is a terrible plague of locusts and drought; more severe judgment is to be withheld if the people repent and turn to God. This section, he thinks, may come from the preëxilic period. The background of ii, 28—iii, 21, on the other hand, he supposes to be purely political. The nation no longer enjoys safety, the people of Jehovah are in distress, and great numbers are in exile; hence he favors for these verses a postexilic date. This view is favored also by the French scholar Vernes, who admits, however, that the arguments are not conclusive. Over against these various attempts to fix definitely the date of Joel a few are ready to admit that the date cannot be determined (Calvin, Ryle).

In view of this extraordinary diversity of opinion the question arises naturally how this lack of unanimity may be accounted for. Disagreement in conclusions based upon investigations of this character may be traced ordinarily to one of two causes—either the use of faulty working principles, or lack of decisive data upon which to base a conclusion. The principle by which every careful investigator in any field of knowledge should be guided is the free and unprejudiced investigation of all the facts in the case. Surely this is a good working principle, and we are assured by every scholar that his conclusion is based upon the most careful investigation of all the facts. The difficulty, then, does not appear to be here. Many scholars readily admit that the data concerning the date of Joel are few, and that most of these are capable of more than one interpretation; and it is to this absence of decisive data that we must trace the great uncertainty concerning the point under discussion. External evidence, the most satisfactory kind of evidence, is entirely lacking, unless we regard as external evidence the place the book occupies in the series of the Minor Prophets. Jerome, arguing from this position, makes Joel a contemporary of Hosea, following his rule that,

when there is no certain proof of the time in which any prophet lived, we are to be directed in our conjectures by the time of the preceding prophet whose date is better known.

It is chiefly internal evidence, therefore, that must decide the question. For convenience' sake we may group this evidence under four heads: (1) Historical Situation; (2) Theological Ideas; (3) Literary Parallels; (4) Linguistic Features.

1. *Historical Situation Stated or Implied.*—The prophet speaks of a great famine (i, 11, 12) caused by the devastation of the land by locusts (i, 4, 6, 16; ii, 4-11, etc.), by drought (i, 17ff.), and, perhaps, by conflagrations (i, 20). Egypt and Edom are denounced for shedding "innocent blood" (iii, 19). Tyre, Sidon, and Philistia are said to have been the chief offenders in the ill treatment of the Israelites; they have taken the silver and gold of Jehovah; his "precious things" they have carried into their temples; and they have sold Jews to the Greeks as slaves (iii, 4-6). The "heritage" of Jehovah is described as "scattered among the nations" who have "parted" his land (iii, 2). The term *Israel* is used in the sense of Judah, as representing the entire chosen people (compare ii, 23, with ii, 27; iii, 1, with iii, 2; and iii, 16b, with iii, 16a, 17). Elders and priests are prominent (i, 9, 13, 14; ii, 17). The valley of Jehoshaphat is the scene of the final conflict (iii, 2). The silence of Joel also may not be without significance. He makes, for example, no mention of king or princes; the northern kingdom is disregarded; the long-time enemies of the Hebrews—the Syrians, the Assyrians, and the Chaldeans—appear nowhere on the scene.

2. *Theological Ideas.*—The Law is not mentioned, but the insistence upon some of its requirements (i, 9, 13, 14; ii, 12-17) is very marked. Great consternation is expressed at the cutting off of the meal offering and the drink offering (i, 9, 13, 16; ii, 14); the greatest blessing that Jehovah can give in response to the prayers of penitence is the restoration of the daily sacrifice (ii, 14). The formal fast and the solemn

assembly play an important part (i, 14; ii, 15ff.). The interest in the religious cult is very prominent (i, 9, 13, 14; ii, 12-17). In summoning the people to repentance Joel calls upon the priests to take the initiative (i, 13; ii, 17). There is no thought of the conversion of the nations; they are all doomed (chap. iii); the outpouring of the Spirit is to be limited (ii, 29); the *day of Jehovah* occupies an important place. Attention may be called also to the silence of Joel concerning specific sins, especially idol worship on the high places, and concerning a future exile as a divine means of purification.

3. *Literary Parallels.*—The book of Joel, containing only seventy-three verses, presents a remarkable number of parallels with other Old Testament books. The most important of these are: i, 15, iii, 14—Isa. xiii, 6, Ezek. xxx, 2, 3, Zeph. i, 7; ii, 1, 2—Zeph. i, 14, 15; ii, 3—Ezek. xxxvi, 35; ii, 6—Nah. ii, 10; ii, 17—Psa. xlii, 2, 9, lxxix, 10, cxv, 2; ii, 27, iii, 17—Ezek. xxxvi, 11, and other passages in Ezekiel, Lev. xviii, 2, 4, 30, etc.; ii, 28—Ezek. xxxix, 29; ii, 32, iii, 17—Obad. 17; iii, 2—Ezek. xxxviii, 22; iii, 3—Obad. 11, Nah. iii, 10; iii, 4, 14—Obad. 15; iii, 10—Isa. ii, 4, Mic. iv, 3; iii, 16—Amos i, 2; iii, 17—Ezek. xxxvi, 11; Obad. 17, etc.; iii, 18—Amos ix, 13; iii, 19—Obad. 10. Altogether about twenty parallels may be noted.

4. *Linguistic Features.* Like every writer, Joel has his own linguistic peculiarities. His style is smooth and flowing, he uses peculiar constructions, gives uncommon meanings to common words, uses several words not common in Hebrew but frequent in Aramaic, and some of his words, phrases, and constructions are found again only in the later literature of the Old Testament.

On the basis of these data the date of the Book of Joel must be determined. Concerning the character and value of the evidence the most diverging opinions are held. Cornill, for example, claims, on purely internal grounds, that in the Book of Joel the question of date is less open to doubt than in the case of any other book; and he, with many others, is

convinced that it belongs to a late date: "We have in the Book of Joel a compendium of the late Jewish eschatology, written about 400 B. C., rather later than earlier." On the other hand, Pusey and others consider the internal evidence too vague to be of assistance in determining the date of Joel. Therefore the former thinks it wise to acquiesce in the tradition by which the Book of Joel is placed next to that of Hosea, and to regard Joel as "the prophet of Judah during the earlier part of Hosea's office toward Israel and rather earlier than Isaiah." Adam Clarke, on the basis of the same data, places Joel in the days of Manasseh; John Wesley, in the time of Amos—"Amos in Israel, Joel in Judah"; Koenig, in the last years of Josiah; Kirkpatrick and many others, during the minority of Jehoash; Pearson and Bunsen, during the reign of Rehoboam, "soon after the invasion of Shishak."

In view of this diversity of opinion it may be well to examine the evidence in detail. The fact that Joel occupies second place among the Minor Prophets may "raise a presumption in favor of an early date"; to some it may even be of sufficient value to leave out of question a postexilic date; but the position of the book is by no means conclusive, for it is generally recognized that, while in the main intended to be chronological, the arrangement of the Minor Prophets cannot be followed implicitly when a question of date is under consideration. Even those who rely upon the argument admit the uncertainty; else why should they place Joel before Hosea (in the days of Jehoash), or after Amos, Micah, Nahum, and Zephaniah (in the later years of Josiah), when in the canon he occupies second place? Moreover, it is universally agreed that chronologically Amos preceded Hosea, while canonically he follows Hosea; again, there are at least good reasons for believing that the Books of Jonah and Obadiah are later productions than the Book of Micah. It is clear, then, that the argument from the position of the book lacks strength. External evidence does not take us very far.

The investigation of the *internal* evidence is beset with many

difficulties, for almost every statement to be examined is capable of more than one interpretation. Locusts, drought, and forest fires are not uncommon in Palestine; from the earliest times to the present the land has been exposed to these calamities. Hence the prevalence of these plagues at the time the prophecies were uttered does not assist us in the attempt to fix the period of Joel's activity. True, it is claimed that the prophet's absorption in the ravages of the locusts reflects the feeling of a purely agricultural community, such as Israel was before the eighth century B. C., but an exactly similar condition existed in Palestine during a part of the Persian period. The silence of the prophet concerning the Syrians, Assyrians, and Chaldeans points either to a very early or to a very late period; either to a period when these nations had not yet exerted any influence upon Judah or when they had again disappeared from the scene. The minority of Jehoash would account for the absence of Assyria and Babylon; for at that time these powers had not yet come into serious conflict with Judah.* But the latter had been drawn into conflict with Syria even before the time of Jehoash (2 Kings viii, 25ff.); and again during his reign it suffered severely at the hands of the Syrians (2 Kings xii, 17ff.); it is quite probable, therefore, that even during the minority of Jehoash the danger was threatening, and the silence concerning Syria may point to a different period. In postexilic times these nations had ceased to be world powers, and silence concerning them would be perfectly intelligible. The nations condemned are Egypt, Edom, Tyre, Sidon, and Philistia. The defenders of the early date explain the charge against Egypt by Shishak's invasion of Judah (1 Kings xiv, 25ff.), about a century before Jehoash, that against Edom by the revolt of the latter against Jehoram (2 Kings viii, 20-22), about 848 B. C. "What more

* The silence concerning Assyria in Amos and in the early discourses of Isaiah does not present an analogy, for, although the name Assyria is absent there, the descriptions of the enemy are so vivid that the reader cannot but feel that the Assyrians are in the minds of the prophets, while here we have absolute silence.

probable," says Kirkpatrick, "than that the revolt was accompanied by a massacre of Israelites resident in Edom?" The condemnation of the Philistines is justified by their attack upon Israel at about the same time (2 Chron. xxi, 16ff.). The Phœnicians are not represented as enemies of Judah in the early historical books, but, since they are condemned as treacherous slave traders by Amos (i, 9, 10), they may have been guilty of cruelty against Hebrews at the earlier date. Amos does not state, however, that the slaves were stolen from Judah, and the theory of the early date leaves the reference to the Phœnicians obscure. In exilic and postexilic times the Edomites showed themselves intensely hostile to the Jews (Ezek. xxv, 12ff.; Psa. cxxxvii, 7, etc.); Tyre and Sidon carried on an active slave trade; Egypt was an old-time enemy of Judah, and might be mentioned equally well after the exile as before. It is difficult, on this theory, to account for the condemnation of Philistia, for no expression of hostility on the part of the Philistines against the Jews is known in the postexilic period. On either theory difficulties remain which must be traced to the incompleteness of the historical material. There is no reason for believing that the biblical historians purposed to narrate every event in the nation's history. Koenig, in order to prove his theory, must also assume "a gap in the historical records concerning the time of Jeremiah," and place the events of Joel iii, 4-7, in this gap. The Phœnicians sold their slaves to the Greeks. Intercourse between Phœnicia and Greece was more common in postexilic times than in the ninth century B. C.; we know that during the later period slave trade was carried on between the two nations; but the possibility of commercial intercourse between the two at an early date cannot be denied. The name *Yawan* occurs on the Tel-el-Amarna tablets, about 1400 B. C.; the form, however, in which the name occurs in Joel seems to point to a late date. Absence of any mention of the northern kingdom might be explained by the exclusiveness of the vision and of the mission of Joel; he was the prophet of Judah, his interest was in Judah; there

was no necessity that he should mention Israel. Besides, the feeling between Israel and Judah at this early time was not the friendliest. In a similar manner may be explained the use of "Israel" to designate the whole people. On the other hand, it would be perfectly legitimate to say that the silence is due to the fact that the northern kingdom was no longer in existence, and so to place the prophecy either after the fall of Samaria in 722 B. C. (Koenig), or after the exile. The most important historical reference is that in iii, 1, 2, 5: "When I shall bring back the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem . . . I will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land. . . . Forasmuch as ye have taken my silver and my gold, and have carried into your temples my goodly pleasant things." Those who accept the early date give the following explanation of these expressions: "I will bring back the captivity" is a phrase used as early as the time of Amos (ix, 14) and Hosea (vi, 11), and therefore does not necessarily presuppose the presence of the exile; besides, the phrase may be rendered, "I will restore the fortune," with no specific reference to an exile. The dispersion of the Israelites among the nations (verse 2) refers not to the dispersion of the entire nation (in 722 or 597 or 586), but "rather to the sale of captives as slaves to distant nations" (compare Amos i, 6, 9). The division of the land is explained by the successes of the Philistines, the Edomites, and other surrounding nations during the reign of Jehoram. These explanations, however, do not seem to do justice to the language of iii, 1-5; the calamity that has befallen the people of God seems to be more serious and far-reaching than this explanation would permit. True, "I will bring back the captivity" is more or less ambiguous, but the definite statement, "my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land," presupposes a very serious calamity. In verse 5 the plunder of the temple is implied. All these expressions become perfectly intelligible if uttered after the destruction of the

temple and of the city in 586, but there seems no calamity in the history of Judah before that time of which such language could be used. Another link in the historical argument is the absence of all reference to a king or to princes, while elders, and especially priests, appear to be prominent. This points to a period when there was no king, or at least when the king had retired into the background. The first condition is met by the exile; the second by the peculiar circumstances of the minority of Jehoash, who came to the throne in his seventh year (2 Kings xii, 1ff.). The silence concerning the king may, however, be purely accidental. The "valley of Jehoshaphat" is the scene of the final conflict. Jehoshaphat gained a great victory over the combined forces of the Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites only about a quarter of a century before the time of Jehoash (2 Chron. xx, 26); and it is thought by some that the remembrance of this recent event may account for the name given to the final battlefield. However, it is more likely that we have here no historical allusion at all, but that the name was given to the scene of the final overthrow simply because of its meaning, "Jehovah judges."

We see, then, that the historical references, with one exception, may be interpreted as pointing either to the minority of Jehoash or to a postexilic period. The exception is iii, 1-5; the expressions there receive a natural interpretation only if the fall of Jerusalem is presupposed.

We next turn to the theological ideas of the book. The Law is not mentioned, it is true, but the references in i, 9, 13, 14; ii, 12-17, clearly imply the existence of some well-defined ceremonial requirements; but they imply more, namely, that the prophet regarded the bringing of the meal offering and of the drink offering as a very essential part of the religion of Jehovah. That such or similar requirements were known in the early prophetic period cannot be doubted in view of the frequent references to them in the eighth century prophecies; but in the emphasis which Joel places upon the ritual service he differs in a very marked manner from all the early

prophets. His utterances are "very unlike the way in which all the other prophets down to Jeremiah speak of the sacrificial service." Irrespective of the date of the origin of the ritualistic and sacrificial legislation, it is a matter of history, as may be clearly seen from the unquestionably postexilic writings, that the emphasis upon the ritual on the part of the religious leaders did not become prominent until after the fall of Jerusalem in 586. While during the minority of Jehoash the priests under the leadership of Jehoiada undoubtedly occupied a very prominent position in Judah, the same may be said with even greater justice of the postexilic period. The silence of Joel concerning the specific sins of the people—idolatry, and the high places—presents a very strong contrast to the utterances of the earlier prophets. Not that Joel omits the moral element in his preaching; but he emphasizes the side of religion which the earlier prophets considered of little or no importance, such as the formal fast and the solemn assembly, while he puts less stress than they upon the purely ethical requirements. That he does not speak of the conversion of the heathen, but only of their destruction, may be accounted for by an early date or by the particularistic spirit of the later Judaism; in the same way either a very early or a very late date may explain the silence concerning a future exile. Thus, while the religious ideas of the book may not be absolutely decisive, they are all more easily accounted for on the hypothesis that Joel is a late prophet. For a discussion of the *day of Jehovah* see page 148.

The literary parallels furnish another set of data. When the parallels are as striking as they are here it becomes impossible to deny all relation of dependence, and we are shut up to one of two conclusions: Either Joel is a very early and popular book, constantly used by writers from Amos to Malachi, or it is very late and makes extensive use of earlier prophecies. In view of the extreme brevity of the book the extraordinary influence implied in the former view could be accounted for only by the presence in the book of unusual features. Why

should so many prophets, whose originality is beyond question, borrow from this book of seventy-three verses? But it would be difficult to find in the Book of Joel anything calculated to give it such extraordinary influence. Certainly the possibility of the prophets borrowing from Joel cannot be denied unless a comparison of the parallels themselves should prove this to be impossible, or at least improbable. Any conclusion, however, must be based upon a study of all the passages, and not, as has been done so often, upon an examination of one or two passages that may particularly favor one's pet theory.

In the consideration of two parallel passages it is always more or less difficult to state with certainty which one of the two is dependent on the other; and it is almost unavoidable that one should be influenced in his final decision by outside considerations. If one starts out with a theory he is very apt to find that the parallels favor his theory. G. B. Gray, who has examined this question more thoroughly, perhaps, than anyone else, reaches the conclusion that Joel is dependent upon the other prophets. On the other hand, Von Orelli insists that "decisive evidence of the preëxilic origin of the writing is found in the literary references to it, . . . but the references to this prophet take us not only to preëxilic times, but even to the time before Amos." A study of the parallels is certainly most instructive, but I venture to say that in no case will it be possible to state—apart from other considerations—which writer is the borrower. Indeed, the words of Driver are very appropriate: "The parallels cannot be used for determining the date of Joel; we can only, *after having determined his date on independent grounds,* point to the parallels as illustrating either his dependence upon other prophets or their dependence upon him." (*Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament,* p. 313.) In his *Commentary* on Joel, Driver, after careful examination of all the parallel passages, asserts that they confirm the conclusion, reached on other grounds, that Joel belongs to the postexilic period (pp. 19ff.).

Many scholars ridicule and reject entirely arguments based

upon diction and style, while others depend almost exclusively upon linguistic features to determine the date of a writing. Both extremes should be avoided. The linguistic character of a literary production depends as much upon the individuality of the author as on the time of its composition. Nevertheless, in the history of every language may be distinguished great epochs whose peculiarities are strongly marked. This is true of the Hebrew language. In its history we may distinguish at least two such epochs, the first extending down to the Babylonian exile, the second from that event onward. To which period does the language of Joel point? The question is answered by Pearson: "Joel's peculiar style is certainly an early one—flowing, elegant, the primary meaning of the words for the most part easy to understand, while poetry and prophecy intermingle, and sometimes pass into metaphors hard to understand." Over against this Holzinger, after the most painstaking examination of the book, thinks himself justified in saying that "the linguistic character of the Book of Joel makes its composition at an early date seem impossible; the book is rather to be assigned to the youngest layer of Old Testament literature." With this claim in mind Kirkpatrick writes: "It is doubtful if the argument from Joel's style and language can be laid in the scale on either side. But it is a strange misrepresentation to say that 'the language of Joel plainly bears the character of the latest period of Hebrew literature.' If any argument can be drawn from it it is in favor of an early date." Koenig also finds evidence in the language of the book to support his theory. Again we have a case in which the data do not seem to be very decisive. The style of Joel is smooth and flowing, but that may be due either to a date during the golden age of Hebrew literature or to an intimate acquaintance with earlier writers. The diction of Joel is in the main pure and classical, but Holzinger has satisfactorily shown that there are peculiarities in the use of words and in grammatical constructions which manifest considerable Aramaic influence and thus point rather to the second period of

Hebrew literature—in other words, to the period after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B. C.

The examination of the data for the determination of the date of Joel is complete. With the exception of a very few they are indecisive—so indecisive, indeed, that for some time to come universal agreement need not be expected. It seems, however, that the few exceptions, namely, the historical references in iii, 1-5, the emphasis on the more external elements of religion, and some of the linguistic peculiarities, favor a post-exilic date. The exact date during this period it may be impossible to determine, though a date subsequent to the final establishment of the law under Nehemiah (444-432 B. C.), perhaps about 400 B. C., is the most probable.

Contents and Outline of the Book of Joel.

The utterances of Joel were called forth by what seems to have been a threefold calamity: locusts (i, 4), drought (i, 16-18), and conflagrations (i, 19, 20). But, while this calamity furnished the occasion for the prophet's declaration, his horizon was not limited by it; on the contrary, his chief interest is with a manifestation of Jehovah still in the future, yet in the prophet's conception near at hand, *the day of Jehovah,* and during the entire discourse he keeps this day prominently before his hearers and readers.

The prophecy falls naturally into two parts, i, 1—ii, 17, and ii, 18—iii, 21. The first section of the first part, i, 1-20, deals mainly with the present condition that rouses the prophet's emotions. He begins by calling the attention of the hearers to the present calamity, which is without parallel in the memory of even the oldest inhabitant. The whole country is waste and desolate (i, 2-4). In view of this calamity he calls for a universal lamentation (5-12), because (1) all luxuries are cut off (5-7), (2) the worship of Jehovah is threatened with interruption (8-10), (3) all means for the sustenance of life are destroyed (11, 12). But this is only the beginning of the great final blow, the judgment of the day of Jehovah. Is there

no escape? Jehovah alone can save; but communion with him is at an end, or is at least threatened. If, however, he is approached rightly he may yet have mercy (13, 14). The prophet continues by giving the reason for his earnest appeal; he sees looming up in the near future the "day of Jehovah as destruction from the Almighty" (15). In justification of his terror he calls attention once more to the awful condition of the land, and closes with a petition to Jehovah for mercy and deliverance (16-20).

The second section, ii, 1-17, presents the thought of chapter i from a somewhat different viewpoint. Now the prophet, while starting again from the present unparalleled calamity, looks upon it chiefly as the harbinger of the day of Jehovah, near at hand (ii, 1-3). The next paragraph presents a word picture of the plague of locusts in "the strongest language of Eastern hyperbole." The appearance of locusts is "as the appearance of horses. . . . Like the noise of chariots on the tops of the mountains do they leap. . . . At their presence the peoples are in anguish. . . . They run like mighty men; they climb the wall like men of war. . . . They leap upon the city; they run upon the wall; they climb up into the houses; they enter in at the windows like a thief" (4-11). This scourge introduces the terrible day itself. Though near at hand it is not too late to avert it, and his summons to repentance is even more earnest than before (12-17).

With verse 17 closes the first division of the book. Here we must assume an interval during which the assembly was held, and solemn rites of penitence and humiliation were observed (18).

The second part, ii, 19—iii, 21, is marked by an entirely different tone. Jehovah is introduced as replying to the petitions of the penitent people. He will remove the plague and grant abundant temporal prosperity (19-26). The temporal blessings will be surpassed by the wonderful spiritual gifts, the presence of Jehovah in the midst of Israel (27), and the outpouring of the Spirit upon all flesh (28, 29). Although tem-

porarily postponed, the day of Jehovah will surely come as a terrible day, inaugurated by wonders in the heavens and in the earth; its terrors, however, will not fall upon the Jews, "for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those that escape" (30-32), but upon the nations that have cruelly wronged the "heritage of Jehovah" (iii, 1-3). Of the doomed nations, Tyre, Sidon, and the Philistines are singled out on account of special hostility to Judah (4-8). The judgment scene is continued in verse 9. The nations are challenged to muster their forces, only to be utterly annihilated in the "valley of decision," under darkened sky, while "Jehovah roars from Zion and utters his voice from Jerusalem." But the day of judgment upon the nations will be a day of triumph for *his* people, for "Jehovah will be a refuge unto his people, and a stronghold to the children of Israel" (9-16). The crisis passed, "Jerusalem shall be holy, and there shall no stranger pass through her any more." Then the land will be blessed with extraordinary fertility, while Egypt and Edom lie waste "because they have shed innocent blood in their land." Judah, on the other hand, "shall abide forever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation" (17-21).

Outline.

TITLE—THE AUTHOR OF THE PROPHECY. CHAP. i, 1.

A. THE HARBINGER OF THE DAY OF JEHOVAH. CHAPS. i, 2–ii, 17.

I. THE SCOURGE OF LOCUSTS, DROUGHT, AND FIRE.....i, 2-20
  1. Graphic description of the scourge.....i, 2-4
  2. Call upon various classes to mourn.....i, 5-12
    Because—
    (1) All luxuries are cut off.....5-7
    (2) The worship of Jehovah is interrupted..8-10
    (3) Means for the sustenance of life are lacking 11, 12
  3. Exhortation to repentance.....i, 13, 14
  4. The awful calamity the forerunner of the day of Jehovah—Prayer for mercy.....i, 15-20

II. THE SCOURGE THE FORERUNNER OF THE DAY OF JUDGMENT; HIGH TIME FOR REPENTANCE (expansion of i, 14, 15)..ii, 1-17

1. More vivid description of the calamity.....ii, 1-11
2. Urgent exhortation to repentance.....ii, 12-17

B. The Day of Jehovah a Day of Blessing to Israel, a Day of Terror to their Enemies. Chaps. ii, 18–iii, 21.

I. The people's repentance (implied); Jehovah's gracious change of purpose.....ii, 18
II. Blessings promised.....ii, 19-29
1. Temporal blessings.....ii, 19-26
2. Spiritual blessings.....ii, 27-29
(1) Restoration of Jehovah's presence.....27
(2) Outpouring of the Spirit.....28, 29
III. Signs of approaching judgment.....ii, 30, 31
IV. Escape of a remnant.....ii, 32
V. Judgment on the nations.....iii, 1-16a
1. All wrongs committed against the people of Jehovah to be avenged.....iii, 1-3
2. The bitterest enemies to suffer the severest punishment.....iii, 4-8
3. Description of the judgment scene.....iii, 9-16a
VI. Glorification of the people of Jehovah.....iii, 16b-21
Israel's final felicity contrasted with the desolation of her enemies.

Interpretation of the Book.

As the date of the Book of Joel has been and still is a matter of dispute, so the interpretation of the first part of the prophecy (i, 2—ii, 17), and in this section the description of the plague of locusts presents the chief difficulties.

The view commonly accepted in ancient times and supported by a few moderns regards the description as *allegorical*. The locusts symbolize hostile armies, the four swarms four successive attacks either by one enemy or by successive world powers. A second view interprets the picture of the locusts, especially that in ii, 1-11, as an *apocalyptic* description of the terrors of the last days. This view understands the locusts of chapter ii to represent locusts, not, however, the locusts of the desert, but "weird supernatural creatures, a mysterious host of unearthly warriors." A third view interprets the description *literally*. The locusts are locusts such as may be seen

in the East today, though in chapter ii they are described with a touch of poetic imagination and Oriental hyperbole.

Another question that enters into the interpretation of the book is whether the prophet describes in i, 2—ii, 17, a plague present to the eyes of his hearers or predicts a future calamity. Again the answers vary. The defenders of the *allegorical* view disagree here. Hilgenfeld thinks that the four swarms are to be explained by four attacks of the Persians upon the Jews, in 525, 484, 460, 458, and he locates the prophecy near the last-mentioned date. Pusey, Hengstenberg, and others regard the calamity as still in the future. The former sees the fulfillment in the ravages of the Assyrians, Chaldeans, Macedonians, and Romans; the latter, in the attacks of the Assyrian-Babylonian, the Persian, the Greek, and the Roman armies. The *apocalyptic* view makes the book, with the possible exception of chapter i, a prediction; the plague of chapter ii will come as a sign or accompaniment of the day of Jehovah. The *historical* theory sees in the plague an event of history and experience which formed the occasion for the prophecy; the day of Jehovah alone is still in the future.

Two questions are, therefore, involved in this discussion: 1. Is i, 2—ii, 17, to be understood literally or not? 2. Are these verses to be regarded as descriptive or predictive? In favor of the *allegorical* view Pusey, following Hengstenberg, advances eight distinct arguments, supplemented by some minor considerations: (1) The expression *the northerner* (ii, 20) cannot refer to locusts, since they never invade Palestine from the north. (2) The prayer, "Give not thine heritage to reproach, that the nations should rule over them" (ii, 17), obviously points to fear of subjection by a foreign foe. (3) The enemy is alluded to as possessing moral responsibility (i, 6; ii, 18, 20). (4) The prophet speaks of fire, flame, and drought (i, 19, 20), which proves that he has in mind something more than a plague of locusts. (5) The imagery would be too extravagant, if used of a mere plague of

locusts: (a) nations (plural) are terrified; (b) the sun and moon are darkened, the shining of the stars is prevented; (c) towns are devastated, while in reality fields are the scenes of the devastation of the locusts; in towns they are destroyed. He adds that, since locusts are a common scourge, no one would use such extravagant imagery in describing their destructiveness. (6) The effects of the scourge are such as do not result from mere locusts: (a) The quantity used for the meal offering and drink offering (i, 9) was so small that even a famine could not occasion their discontinuation; (b) The promise, "I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten" (ii, 25), cannot refer to locusts, because locusts are only a passing scourge; they destroy the fruit of only one year, not that of several years; (c) The exhortation to the beasts of the field to rejoice because the tree beareth her fruit (ii, 22) must be a metaphor, for trees are not food for cattle; (d) The scourge is spoken of as greater than any which they or their fathers knew of, and as one ever to be remembered (i, 2, 3), "but Israel had many worse scourges than any plague of locusts, however severe." (7) "The destruction of this scourge of God is described in a way taken doubtless in its details from the destruction of locusts, yet as a whole physically impossible in a literal sense." (8) Pusey regards the day of Jehovah as identical with the scourge described by the prophet, but "the day of Jehovah includes more than any plague of locusts."

The weakness of some of these arguments is self-evident. For instance, it is nowhere stated that the locust plague is the only calamity (4); the prophet in all probability means just what he says, that drought and fires accompanied the plague of locusts. The prophet, in pointing out the severity of the plague of locusts, does not compare it with all kinds of calamities (6, d); he simply says that it was the severest *plague of locusts.* In a similar way the identification of the plague with the day of Jehovah (8) rests upon misinterpretation (compare i, 15; ii, 1, etc.). Several of the other arguments lose their force when we consider that the description

of an historic event by no means excludes the use of poetic or imaginative language. Joel's style is highly poetic and imaginative; this explains the apparent endowment of the locusts with rational powers, and accounts for the description of the devastation wrought by the locusts, which Pusey considers "physically impossible." It is difficult to understand how this eminent commentator could make this statement, in view of the fact that he quotes in his commentary a large number of extracts from reports of travelers describing the ravages of locusts in the East. If the following accounts are true—and we have no reason to doubt their accuracy—we must readily admit that Joel does not exaggerate unduly: "They seemed to march in regular battalions, crawling over everything that lay in their passage, in one straight front. They entered the inmost recesses of the houses, were found in every corner, stuck to our clothes, and infested our food." "But their number was astounding; the whole face of the mountain was black with them. On they came like a disciplined army. We dug trenches and kindled fires, and beat and burned to death heaps upon heaps, but the effort was utterly useless. They charged up the mountain side, and climbed over rocks, walls, ditches, and hedges, those behind coming up and passing over the masses already killed. . . . While on the march they consumed every green thing with wonderful eagerness and expedition" (Thomson). Scores of travelers have given similar testimony. There is not one feature in the description of Joel that is not supported by the testimony of one or more travelers. Only three arguments in favor of the allegorical view remain: the use of the term *northerner,* the prayer which seems to imply fear of subjugation by a foreign invader, and the implication that the plague continued for more than one year. It is readily admitted that ordinarily locusts do not appear in successive years, but this is not a universal rule; and the plague described by Joel was one of unusual severity. The designation *the northerner* may also be explained. While locusts do invade Palestine generally from the south or the

southeast, there is not sufficient ground for saying that they *never* come from the north (see on ii, 20). But this is not the only solution possible. It is quite probable that the term was applied to the locusts to designate "their office as heralds of the last day." According to Jer. i, 14, and Ezek. xxxviii, 6, 15, the instruments of Jehovah's wrath in the final judgment are to come from the north. From these passages the term might have received a typical meaning, typical of doom, and in this sense Joel applies the word to his locusts.

The only argument remaining receives its entire force from a misinterpretation, or even a mistranslation. Certainly the original may be rendered "that the nations should rule over them," but, as suggested in the margin of A. R. V., another translation is within the range of possibility: "that the nations should use a byword against them." "The calamity which had befallen them would seem to be due to the unwillingness or inability of Jehovah to protect them, so that the heathen would mockingly ask, Where is thy God?" But, granting the correctness of the common translation, Pusey's argument is not justified. The passage reads not, "Give not thy heritage to the nations to rule over them," "but "give not thy heritage to *reproach, that the nations should rule over them.*" In other words, the prophet recognizes an intermediate stage between the calamity and the nation's subjugation. A scourge of locusts such as is described in these chapters would exhaust the resources of the country, and an alert enemy might improve the opportunity to overwhelm the nation.

Not only are the arguments in favor of the *allegorical* view inconclusive; the terms of the description itself make this interpretation impossible. The locusts are compared to an army; it is hardly like that any writer would compare a symbol with the reality it is intended to symbolize. Moreover, to speak of a victorious host as entering the conquered city *like a thief* (ii, 9) would be an indication of considerable thoughtlessness. Even a modified form of the

allegorical view, which admits that the references in chapter i are to real locusts, but insists that in chapter ii we must see an army of soldiers, is untenable, since a comparison of ii, 11, "Jehovah uttereth his voice before *his army;* for his camp is very great," with ii, 25, "I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, *my great army* which I sent among you," with i, 4, "That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten," proves that the *army* of chapter ii is expressly identified with the locusts of chapter i.

To this should be added that the prophet speaks (ii, 25) only of such acts of devastation as are actually wrought by locusts. There is no hint of ravages wrought by a human army, of bloodshed, destroyed cities, and captives.

The weakness of the *apocalyptic* argument is revealed by the arguments advanced against the *allegorical* view; its absolute untenableness will be seen as we pass to the consideration of the second question: Is i, 2—ii, 17, descriptive or predictive?

The answers to this second question are determined very largely by the attitude of the student toward the first question. It is not necessary to discuss in detail the arguments advanced in favor of the *predictive* interpretation. All that is needed is to call attention briefly to the indications which seem to put the *descriptive* interpretation beyond question.

1. *The General Character of Prophecy.*—The horizon of the prophet is not limited by his own immediate future; he may, and very often does, look forward to events even beyond our own time; but the prophet, if we judge from the prophecies whose dates are fixed with certainty, *always starts from the circumstances of his own day.* The prophecies are not abstract productions of the study; they are direct messages to the people for the purpose of meeting a present crisis. If, now, the plague is removed into the future the occasion for

the message disappears, and the prophecy becomes a "mere learned study or *midrash* on preceding prophetical literature."

2. But we need not depend upon *a priori* reasoning alone. The impression made by the appeal, "Hear this, ye old men, and give ear, all ye inhabitants of the land. Hath this been in your days, or in the days of your fathers? Tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation. That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten," is certainly that the hearers have experienced the calamity of which he speaks. Or read the exhortation to the priests in verse 13, or the utterances of the prophet in 15-20. Surely the only natural interpretation is that which recognizes that the prophet addresses the priests and the people out of an actual, present experience. The same is true of ii, 12ff.: "Turn ye unto me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: and rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto Jehovah your God." There is, indeed, no feature of the description of the plague that would indicate that this part of the book is to be regarded as predictive.

We may conclude, then, that the most probable, yea, the only natural, interpretation of the Book of Joel is that which regards the references to the locusts as descriptive of an actual plague of locusts, accompanied, as is the case frequently, by drought, and perhaps by forest fires. This calamity formed the occasion for the prophecy and influenced the prophet's conception of the day of Jehovah; in return his description of the plague cannot have remained uninfluenced by the thought of the terrible day toward which the present calamity was thought to point.

Teaching of the Book.

Whatever the date of the Book of Joel, and whatever the interpretation of individual parts, its teaching is obvious, since

it expresses no essentially new or mysterious truths. "If the prophecy were very ancient it would be interesting as being a kind of prophetic chart which subsequent writers followed. If it be late, as modern writers are inclined to conclude, though it still has its interest, it loses the originality and novelty which would otherwise belong to it."

The teaching of the prophet centers, as already indicated, around the day of Jehovah, the great, future crisis in which Jehovah will manifest his majesty and power in the destruction of his enemies and in the deliverance of those who trust in him; the day which marks the beginning of the Messianic age. Concerning this day he teaches: (1) Its approach is marked by great convulsions and extraordinary phenomena in the sphere of nature. This thought is implied in the prophet's interpretation of the significance of the calamity that called forth his prophecy; and it is expressed definitely in ii, 30, 31. (2) The character of the day will be determined by the attitude of heart and life toward Jehovah. It will be a day of terror to all the people if they continue in their present spiritual condition (i, 15; ii, 11); but it may be a day of blessing if they truly repent (ii, 12-14, 19-29). (3) When the day of Jehovah finally does come those who call upon the name of Jehovah shall be delivered (ii, 31), but the enemies of the people of Jehovah, and as such the enemies of Jehovah himself, will be annihilated (chapter iii).

Now, while all the essential features of the eschatological vision of Joel are found in other prophetic writings (for example, Amos ix, 13; Hos. ii, 21, 22; Isa. iv, 2-6), it must not be thought that Joel simply repeats the messages of the earlier prophets. He is acquainted with them, yet he impresses upon them the stamp of his own personality, and, in some cases at least, he enlarges upon them.

1. He differs from other prophets in his emphasis upon the *outpouring of the Spirit.* That in the new age the Spirit of Jehovah will be more prominent is announced by others, but nowhere else do we meet a promise so comprehensive, the

fulfillment of which would mean the realization of the wish of Moses, "Would that all Jehovah's people were prophets, that Jehovah would put his Spirit upon them" (Num. xi, 29). This promise will live in the hearts and thoughts of Christians forever because of the use made of it by Peter on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii, 14ff.), and because that day actually marked the beginning of the era during which the promise has been and is being fulfilled with ever-increasing fullness, and in a manner far superior to the expectation of our prophet.

2. Another point deserving special mention is *the absence of the universalism of Messianic prophecy,* such as we have, for example, in Isa. ii, 3, 4: "And many peoples shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mount of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem. And he will judge between the nations, and will decide concerning many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Joel apparently sees no salvation for the nations; Israel is to be saved and glorified, the nations are to be judged and destroyed. Even the promise concerning the outpouring of the spirit upon *all flesh* is, on closer study, seen to be limited to the descendants of Abraham. The promise is to "*your* sons and *your* daughters, . . . *your* old men, . . . *your* young men." But it would not be proper to condemn the prophet for this seeming exclusiveness. It was this very limitation during the centuries following the exile that made possible the existence of the religion of Jehovah in unadulterated form, so that the promise, "and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. xii, 3), might be fulfilled. That Israel remained Israel in spite of the attempts of the Samaritans and other surrounding nations, in spite of the influence of the Persians, "in spite of the Greek arms and the Greek mind, was due to the legalism of Ezra and Nehemiah, and to what we

may call the narrow enthusiasm of Joel." That a later generation failed to see that the crisis had passed, that it was time to "go into all the world" to spread the knowledge of Jehovah to "every creature," that an illegitimate exaggeration and a false interpretation of the utterances of men of God, such as our prophet, was responsible even for the rejection by the Jews of the Messiah when he actually appeared among men, surely cannot be made a basis of accusation against the prophet Joel.

3. In another feature of his representation Joel differs from some of the prophets that preceded him. Isaiah predicted that the kingdom of God was to be established under the rule of a "shoot out of the stock of Jesse" (Isa. ix, 6, 7; xi, 1); Jeremiah announced that Jehovah would at the time of the restoration "cause a branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land" (xxxiii, 15). In a similar manner other prophets speak of an earthly, personal representative of Jehovah. According to Joel's conception, when the final crisis arrives *it is Jehovah himself who interferes,* both in judging the nations and in delivering his children. It is he who in his own person will rule in Zion: "I am in the midst of Israel" (ii, 27), "I am Jehovah your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain" (iii, 17), "Jehovah dwelleth in Zion" (iii, 21). There is no reference to a Messianic king.

4. On account of his emphasis on the externals of religion (i, 9, 13, 14; ii, 12-17), in which attitude he differs from the preëxilic prophets, Joel has sometimes been accused of neglecting entirely the "weightier matters" of the law. Here, as always, we must guard against extremes. That his attitude toward sacrifice is not that of Amos v, 21ff., or of Isa. i, 11ff., may be readily admitted; *that he entirely lacked interest in the fulfillment of moral requirements is not true.* For he promises deliverance to the people not on the basis of the painstaking observance of the form of religion, but on the basis of "godly sorrow that worketh repentance for salvation" (compare especially ii, 12, 13).

JOEL.

CHAPTER I.

THE word of the LORD that came to Joel the son of Pethuel. 2 Hear this, ye old men, and give ear, all ye inhabitants of the land. [a]Hath this been in your days, or even in the days of your fathers? 3 [b]Tell ye your children of it, and *let* your children *tell* their children, and their children another generation. 4 [c] [1]That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust

[a] Chap. 2. 2.—[b] Psa. 78. 4.—[c] Deut. 28. 38; chap. 2. 25.

1 Heb. *The residue of the palmerworm.*

CHAPTER I.

1. *The title.* **The word of Jehovah**—A title similar to that in Hos. i, 1; Mic. i, 1; Zeph. i, 1 (see on Hos. i, 1). Brevity and simplicity are in favor of authenticity, but that its "simplicity testifies to its great antiquity" (Hitzig) cannot be maintained (compare Nah. i, 1; Hab. i, 1; Mal. i, 1). For names see Introduction, p. 125.

The Scourge of Locusts, Drought, and Fire, i, 2–20.

Out of the midst of a terrible calamity (i, 2–4) the prophet summons the people to universal lamentation (5–12). He sees in the present disaster the harbinger of the day of Jehovah. To avert its terrors he exhorts all to turn to Jehovah in penitent supplication (13–15). He calls attention once more to the present awful condition, and closes with a prayer for deliverance (16–20).

2. **Hear this**—A solemn summons to give attention to the words about to be uttered (Amos iii, 1; iv, 1; v, 1). **Inhabitants of the land**—With Joel Judah, since all his interest seems to center there (see verse 14; ii, 1, 32; iii, 1, 17, etc.). **Old men**—Not "elders" in an official sense, for, if mentioned at all by Joel, these do not appear until verse 14; but those who have lived longest, who have experienced most, whose memories run back farthest, and whose testimony, therefore, will be of greatest weight in a case where appeal to past experiences is made. **This**—That is, a calamity such as the one described in verse 4. The witnesses are asked whether such a calamity had been in their days, or whether the present generation had been told that there had ever been one like it. **In the days of your fathers**—"Among the people of the East memories of past times were handed down from generation to generation for periods which to us would seem incredible." 3. The reply is not stated; the prophet continues, well aware that the answer could only be an emphatic *No!* He requests his hearers to hand down the story of the calamity from one generation to another as an event unique and unparalleled. **Tell**—The Hebrew verb comes from the same root from which is derived the word "book." Here the verb is in the intensive form; it means more, therefore, than ordinary telling; it means the giving of careful, detailed information. This verse may be compared with Psa. lxxviii, 5–7; Deut. iv, 9; vi, 6, 7, 20–24; xi, 19, etc. The memory of the wonders of Jehovah's love, his deliverances, his laws and statutes were to be handed down from father to son; here the memory of unparalleled woe and judgment; such story would not be without its lessons.

4. Description of the calamity to which verses 2, 3 point. "The land is bare, swarm after swarm of destruc-

eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath left hath the caterpiller eaten.

[d] Isa. 32. 10.

5 Awake, ye drunkards, and weep; and howl, all ye drinkers of wine, because of the new wine; [d]for it is cut off from your mouth. 6 For [e]a

[e] So Prov. 30. 25, 26, 27; chap. 2. 2, 11, 25.

tive locusts have devoured the crops and the foliage." What are we to understand by the four classes of locusts mentioned: (1) *gāzām*, (2) *arbeh*, (3) *yeleq*, (4) *ḥāsîl;* The first may be rendered "shearer," the second "swarmer," the third "licker," the fourth "devourer." Of these four names *arbeh* seems to be the generic term for locust; it is the one used most frequently in the Old Testament. *Gāzām* occurs again only in ii, 25, and Amos iv, 9; in Amos the name is selected in the place of the common one because it suggests in itself destructiveness. *Yeleq* seems to be used in Psa. cv, 34, as equivalent to *arbeh*, and in Nah. iii, 15, the two are used apparently as synonyms. In a similar way *ḥāsîl* is used as equivalent to *arbeh* in Deut. xxviii, 38; Isa. xxxiii, 4, etc. From these facts it may be safe to infer that *gāzām*, *yeleq*, and *ḥāsîl* are all epithets applied to *arbeh*. The prophet piles up these names simply for rhetorical purposes, "to picture the work of destruction as complete and final." So Wellhausen and Nowack, "The names are heaped up to exhaust the genus even to its last individual." This is a more probable interpretation than that which makes the four names designations of four different kinds of locusts, or of locusts in four successive stages of development. The latter view is advocated by Credner, Wuensche, and others, but it is made impossible by ii, 25, where the four names occur in different order; again, the stage designated by *arbeh* would be an undeveloped state, which is improbable, since it is the most common term for locust; besides, it would be difficult to distinguish between four separate stages in the life of the locust. That four different kinds of locusts are meant cannot be shown from the context, and the use of the names in other passages speaks against this view. Driver's view, also, which regards the four names in part as synonymous designations of the same species, in part as designations of different species and in part as designating the ordinary locust in different stages of development is improbable.

5–12. The prophet calls upon all to lament, because all luxuries are cut off (5–7); the worship of Jehovah has suffered through the interruption, or at least threatened interruption, of the meal offerings and the drink offerings (8–10); and the means for the sustenance of life are destroyed and cut off by the locusts (11, 12). 5. **Wine**—Frequently spoken of as a blessing from God (Hos. ii, 8, etc.), which was often abused. One of the results of abuse is the blinding of the spiritual faculties. One of the six woes in Isa. v, 8ff., is against the dissipating nobles who, as a result of their revelries, "regard not the work of Jehovah, neither have they considered the operation of his hand." Though the judgment has fallen, the stupefied drunkards are not yet aware of it. **Awake**—It is high time to awake from the sleep of intoxication (Gen. ix, 24; Prov. xxiii, 35). **Weep**—If no other and higher motives appeal to them, at least the loss of the wine should arouse them; the supply will soon be exhausted, the luxurious living, the revelries, must cease. **New** ["sweet"] **wine**—Heb. *'āsîs*, "that which is pressed out"; therefore, "the newly pressed wine," "sweet wine," "must." In iii, 18, it is regarded as a blessing from God (Amos ix, 13). In Isa. xlix, 26, it is referred to in a way that would indicate its intoxicating character (compare Song of Songs, viii, 2). The exhortation was

nation is come up upon my land, strong, and without number, [f]whose teeth *are* the teeth of a lion, and he hath the cheek teeth of a great lion. 7 He hath [g]laid my vine waste, and [2]barked my fig tree: he hath made

[f] Rev. 9. 8.—[g] Isa. 5. 6.

[2] Heb. laid *my fig tree for a barking.*

very appropriate if the vintage was near at hand when the locusts appeared and laid waste the vineyards (7, 12).

The drunkards, startled from their slumber, might inquire for the cause of it all. Verses 6, 7 furnish the answer. First the prophet calls attention to the immense numbers of the enemies, then to their terrible weapons, finally to the awful results of their attack. **Nation**—Heb. *gôy.* The locusts devastate the land like a hostile army. The use of *gôy* furnishes no support to the allegorical view; it is synonymous with *'am* (ii, 27), which is used of animals (Prov. xxx, 25, 26; Zeph. ii, 14); here specially appropriate, because the figure of a hostile army is continued. **Come up upon**—A military term used of the approach of an enemy (1 Kings xx, 22; Isa. xxi, 2; Nah. ii, 2). **My land**—A comparison with ii, 1, "my holy mountain," might justify the explanation that the prophet means Jehovah's land (Pusey, Von Orelli, and others), but it is better to interpret the pronoun as referring to the prophet, who identifies himself with and speaks in the name of the people (7, 13, 19, etc.). **Strong**—Not easily tired, able to take a long journey, and to persevere until the destruction is complete. **Without number**—No exaggeration, if we accept the testimony of those who have experienced calamities of this sort. "Myriads upon myriads of locusts were about us, covering the ground and shutting out the view in all directions." **Teeth**—These are the weapons of the enemy. "The locusts' teeth are edged like a saw and very powerful; hence, though infinitely smaller, they may for destructiveness be compared with those of a lion." It is said by Morier that the teeth of the locust "appear to have been created for a scourge; since to strength incredible for so small a creature they add sawlike teeth admirably calculated to eat up all the herbs in the land." An interesting parallel to "a lion's teeth" is Ecclus. xxi, 2, where the teeth of sin are likened to the "teeth of a lion slaying the souls of men." **Cheek teeth**—Better, *jaw teeth*—the sharp and prominent eyeteeth. **Lion, . . . great lion**—Or, *lioness*—The second line is not a useless repetition, but an advance over the first. It is generally thought that the lioness is even fiercer than the lion in attack, especially when she tries to defend her whelps (see on Hos. xiii, 8). An early writer, Ælianus (*Historia,* xii, 39), says, "Not only among the Greeks, but also among the barbarians, the lioness is thought to be the strongest animal and the one hardest to be fought."

Verse 7 deals with the destruction wrought. Literally, *He has made my vine to waste, and my fig tree to splinter.* The Hebrew for the last word occurs only here; its meaning is, therefore, somewhat uncertain. The same word in its masculine form is found in Hos. x, 7, where it is translated (in R. V. margin) "twigs," so here, "twigs" or "splinters." The interpretation implied in the rendering of A. V. is undoubtedly correct, for the prophet has in mind the "gnawing and eating away" of the bark. The vine and the fig tree are the principal fruit trees of Palestine, the pride of the land; their destruction would be the greatest possible calamity. **Clean bare**—Literally, *making bare he has made it bare.* Through constant gnawing the locust has made the tree entirely bare; the blossoms, the foliage, the bark, everything that can be gnawed off he has taken away. "It is sufficient if these terrible columns stop half an hour on a spot for everything growing on it,

it clean bare, and cast *it* away; the branches thereof are made white.

8 [h]Lament like a virgin girded with sackcloth for [i]the husband of

[h] Isa. 22. 12.—[i] Prov. 2. 17; Jer. 3. 4.

vines, olive trees, corn, to be entirely destroyed. After they have passed nothing remains but the large branches and the roots, which, being underground, have escaped their voracity." (From an account of the devastation caused by locusts, in Spain in 1841.) "The bushes were eaten quite bare, though the animals could not have been long on the spot. . . . They sat by hundreds on a bush gnawing the rind and the woody fibers" (Lichtenstein, *Travels in South Africa*, p. 251). **And cast it away**—R. V. margin, "down"—to the ground. As the italics indicate, there is in the original no pronominal suffix to indicate what is cast down. Hardly the trees themselves (Keil); more probably, that "which is not green and contains no sap, that which is uneatable"; it the locust flings away with anger and contempt. **And the branches thereof are made white**—Literally, *they make white, show whiteness.* Branches, as the etymology of the word, *something intertwined*, indicates, are the branches of the vine only; through the gnawing off of the bark the white of the vine becomes visible. "The country did not seem to be burned, but to be covered with snow on account of the whiteness of the trees" (Fr. Alvarez, *das Indias*, quoted by Pusey in loco). H. Ludolf, in *History of Æthiopia*, speaking of locusts, says: "Neither herbs, nor shrubs, nor trees remain unhurt. Whatever is either grassy or covered with leaves is injured as if it had been burned with fire; even the bark of the trees is nibbled with their teeth, so that the injury is not confined to one year alone" (ii, 25).

With verse 8 begins a new paragraph. The prophet turns from the winebibbers to the entire community (8–10), urging it to bewail the devastation of the land, as a virgin would mourn the death of the beloved of her youth. All prospects for the future are blighted; want stares them in the face. The most serious aspect of the calamity, however, is the fact that the means to maintain the legal worship have become or are about to become exhausted. 8. **Lament**—Heb. *'ălāh;* only here, but the meaning is clear from the Aramaic and Syriac. The form is feminine; this and the comparison with the bereaved virgin indicate that a feminine is addressed, perhaps "my land" (verse 6); at any rate, the whole community. **Like a virgin**—Heb. *bethûlāh;* literally, *one who is separated*, that is, one who is separated from all others to cleave to one, and also one who has not "been known by any man" (Gen. xxiv, 16); always a virgin in the strictest sense of the term. **Girded with sackcloth**—Sackcloth is a coarse material woven from goats' and camels' hair, used for sacks, tent covers, etc. The wearing of this cloth around the loins was one of the symbols of mourning, both in cases of private bereavement (Gen. xxxvii, 34; 2 Sam. iii, 31) and in lamentations over public calamities (Amos viii, 10; Jer. xlviii, 37). What the origin of the custom and what the form of the garment worn is uncertain. (See article "Sackcloth," Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible.*) **The husband of her youth**—The word rendered "husband" means literally *possessor, owner* (Exod. xxi, 28; Isa. i, 3), so also the verb connected with the noun (Isa. xxvi, 13; 1 Chron. iv, 22); but it is used very frequently in the sense of husband, the usage being due undoubtedly to the earlier conception of the marriage relation, when the wife was considered the property of the husband. But, since *bethûlāh* is apparently always used of a young woman who has not yet entered into actual marital relations, the word *ba'al* is used here in all probability in the sense of "betrothed" (ag. Nowack

her youth. 9 [k]The meat offering and the drink offering is cut off from the house of the LORD; the priests, the LORD's ministers, mourn.

[k] Verse 13; chap. 2. 14.

and Wellhausen whose explanations do not remove the difficulty but simply transfer it to *bethûlāh*); and in the light of the marriage customs of the ancient Hebrews such a use of the word is perfectly legitimate. The first important step in the betrothal procedure was the settlement of the amount of the *mōhar*, the so-called dowry, and the payment or part payment of the same. The *mōhar* was not a dowry in the modern sense of that term, that is, a portion brought by the bride into the husband's family, but a price or ransom paid to the father or brother of the bride. (See article "Marriage," Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible;* W. R. Smith, *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia;* Tristram, *Eastern Customs.*) "After the betrothal the bride was under the same restrictions as a wife. If unfaithful, she ranked and was punished as an adulteress (Deut. xxii, 23, 24); on the other hand, the bridegroom, if he wished to break the contract, had the same privileges, and also had to observe the same formalities, as in the case of divorce. The situation is illustrated in the history of Joseph and Mary, who were on the footing of betrothal (Matt. i, 19)." The grief of the community is to be like the intense, bitter grief of one whose brightest hopes and most joyful anticipations have been shattered by the death of her loved one before she was ever led to his home. The comparison of the land with a virgin was especially appropriate, since in Hebrew the land, or city, or their inhabitants, are often personified as *daughter*, or, *virgin* (Amos v, 2; Isa. i, 8; Lam. i, 1).

Verse 9 gives the justification for the call to universal lamentation. The meal offering and the drink offering are cut off from the house of Jehovah. These offerings must of necessity cease, as a result of the general devastation described in verse 10. **Meat offering**—Better, R. V., "meal offering"; Heb. *minḥāh;* literally, *gift, present;* therefore, perhaps, the oldest word for offerings in general. It is used in the Old Testament to designate the cereal or meal offerings, consisting of fine meal or of unleavened bread, cakes, wafers, or of ears of roasted grain, always with salt and, except in the sin offering, with olive oil (Lev. ii, 1, 4, 13, 14; v, 11). The meal offering might be offered by itself; if so, part might be offered upon the altar while the rest would go to the priests, or the whole might be consumed on the altar, as in the case of the burnt offering. The meal offering might also be an accompaniment of other offerings; then again it might be either wholly consumed, or part might be burned and the rest be given to the priests (Amos v, 22). **Drink offering**—Heb. *nesekh.* Not an independent offering; a libation made with the meal offering usually accompanying a burnt offering (Num. xv, 5; xxviii, 7, 8). Wine was the common material used; sometimes oil was substituted (Gen. xxxv, 14), in a case of necessity perhaps even water (1 Sam. vii, 6; 2 Sam. xxiii, 16). In this verse the reference is undoubtedly to the meal offering which, according to Exod. xxix, 38–41; Num. xxviii, 3–8, accompanied the daily morning and evening burnt offerings. **The house of Jehovah**—The temple. According to Joel it is the only place where Jehovah is worshiped. Whether the bringing of the offerings had already ceased or was only threatened we cannot say; even the possibility of such serious calamity might call for loudest lamentation, for these daily offerings were a bond between heaven and earth; to discontinue them would be a breaking of the bond, a severing of the covenant relation between Jehovah and his people, and so would

10 The field is wasted, the [1]land mourneth; for the corn is wasted: [m]the new wine is [3]dried up, the oil languisheth. **11** [n]Be ye ashamed, O

[1] Jer. 12. 11; 14. 2.—[m] Verse 12; Isa. 24. 7.

[3] Or, *ashamed*.—[n] Jer. 14. 3, 4.

mark the utter rejection of the people by their God. This symbolic meaning of the daily sacrifice accounts for the determination of the priests, during the siege of Jerusalem by Pompey, to continue the daily sacrifice at all costs: "And anyone may hence learn how very great piety we exercise toward God, . . . since the priests were not at all hindered from their sacred ministrations, . . . but did still twice each day . . . offer their sacrifices on the altar; nor did they omit those sacrifices if any melancholy accident happened by the stones that were thrown among them; for although the city was taken . . . and the enemy then fell upon them, and cut the throats of them that were in the temple, yet could not those that offered the sacrifices be compelled to run away, neither by the fear they were in of their own lives, nor by the number that were already slain, as thinking it better to suffer whatever came upon them, at their very altars, than to omit anything that their laws required of them" (Josephus, *Antiquities*, xiv, iv, 3). The terror of the Jews at the interruption of the daily sacrifice during the siege of the city by Titus is also described by Josephus (*Wars of the Jews*, vi, ii, 1.) **The priests**—The priests received a part of the meal offerings as a means of support; their grief might be due to the fear that their income would be cut off (Wuensche); but the additional thought seems to be in the mind of the prophet, that as the religious leaders they would feel more intensely the disaster and understand more fully its significance. **Jehovah's ministers**—Not the ordinary word for servant, but *meshārēth*, the word commonly used in later times for a minister at the sanctuary; in New Hebrew the term for priestly service is derived from the same root. The ancient translations of this verse differ from the Hebrew; the Septuagint reads "the servants of the altar," and one manuscript (B) adds, "of Jehovah." It also takes the first two words of verse 10 to verse 9, connecting them with what precedes by "because." The Arabic reads, "Grieve, ye priests, who minister at the altar, for it (the altar) is in need"; the Syriac, "the kings and princes sit in sorrow."

Verse 10 explains why the daily offerings must be discontinued. The fields are wasted, the prospects for harvest gone. The real force of the original cannot be brought out in a translation; "Joel loads his clauses with the most leaden letters he can find, and drops them in quick succession, repeating the same heavy word again and again, as if he would stun the careless people into some sense of the bare, brutal weight of the calamity which has befallen them." G. A. Smith translates the verse:

> The fields are blasted, the ground
> is in grief;
> Blasted is the corn, abashed is the
> new wine, the oil pines away.

The field is wasted—A play upon words in the original. **The land mourneth**—*Land* and *field* are practically synonymous, but when used together a distinction may be noted: *sādheh*, "field," is in a narrower sense the cornfield, as distinguished from orchards and vineyards; *'adhāmāh* "land," all cultivated land, be it cornfields, or orchards, or vineyards. The land is endowed with powers of personality (Jer. xii, 4, 11; xxiii, 10; Isa. xxxiii, 9; in a similar way, Psa. lxv, 13, "The valleys . . . shout for joy, they also sing"). The calamity is so great that even the lifeless ground is touched by it and participates in the lamentation. The loss is complete. **Corn . . . new wine . . . oil**—The three principal products of

ye husbandmen; howl, O ye vinedressers, for the wheat and for the barley; because the harvest of the field is perished. 12 °The vine is dried up, and the fig tree languisheth; the pomegranate tree, the palm tree

° Verse 10.

Palestine, frequently mentioned as blessings from Jehovah which he may withdraw as a punishment (Num. xviii, 12; Deut. vii, 13; xi, 14; Hos. ii, 8). "The words, though they may be used with reference to the corn in the ears, and the juice in the grapes and in the olives, denote more particularly these products after they have been adapted partially for the food or use of man." *Corn* (Heb. *dāghān*) signifies the grain of wheat after it has been threshed; *new wine* (Heb. *tîrōsh*), the grape juice after it has passed the stage of *'āsîs* (verse 5) and has become partly fermented (see Driver, *Joel and Amos*, p. 79); *oil* (Heb. *yishâr*), the freshly made juice of the olive. Along with corn and wine, oil may be regarded as one of the indispensable necessities of life to the Oriental. Oil was used for illumination (Exod. xxv, 6; Matt. xxv, 3), for food (Ezek. xvi, 13), for baking (1 Kings xvii, 12; Lev. ii, 1–7), for medicinal purposes (Isa. i, 6), for anointing the body, especially after a bath (2 Sam. xiv, 2), for the anointing of the king (1 Sam. x, 1). (See, further, Van Lennep, *Bible Lands*, pp. 124ff.; Nowack, *Archœologie*, pp. 237ff.) **Dried up**—Margin, "ashamed." It is not quite certain whether the verb is from a root "to be ashamed," or from one "to dry up"; as far as the form is concerned, either is possible. The latter is the meaning adopted by the ancient versions, but the former is more probable in the sense of "be frustrated," "fail." The verb taken with the first word of verse 11 may indicate an intentional play upon words. **Languisheth**—Used of plants in the sense of "to wither" (verse 12; Isa. xvi, 8; xxiv, 7); in a secondary sense of a city (Jer. xiv, 2); of a childless woman (1 Sam. ii, 5; compare Jer. xv, 9); of persons disappointed in their hopes (Isa. xix, 8; compare Hos. iv, 3). The sense of the verse is clear: the locusts have wasted the grain, so that there will be no harvest; the vineyards, so that they can bear no grapes; and the olive orchards, so that they can bear no olives for oil.

11, 12. Call to the plowmen and to the vinedressers. They too have ground for lamentation, since their prospects are completely ruined. It is better to regard verse 11 as an appeal and not as a declaratory sentence. The special appeal in verse 5 advances to the general in verse 8, then returns to the special in verse 11. **Be ye ashamed**—The Hebrew verb is used also in the sense of "to be disappointed" (Isa. i, 29; xx, 5); it expresses intense disappointment, which manifests itself in the terrified look, the change of color; we might render, with Keil, "turn pale." The cause for terror is stated in the latter part of the verse, "for the wheat and for the barley, because the harvest of the field is perished." The locusts have devastated everything. **Howl, O ye vinedressers**—Since the destruction of various trees (verse 12) seems to be the cause for the lamentation of the "vinedressers," it is necessary to seek a more comprehensive term; *kerem* means "vineyard," but also "garden" or "orchard" (Judg. xv, 5); the *kôrēm* is therefore the keeper of the orchard, the gardener as well as the vinedresser. **The fig tree**—Native in Western Asia; very plentiful in Palestine. It was highly prized, and is often mentioned along with the vine (Deut. viii, 8; Jer. v, 17). To "sit under one's vine and fig tree" is a symbol of prosperity and security (1 Kings iv, 25; Mic. iv, 4). Figs were dried and pressed into cakes, and they formed a staple article of food (1 Sam. xxv, 18); they were used also as a poultice (2 Kings xx, 7; Isa.

xxxviii, 21). Grapes and figs are called by Josephus (*Wars*, iii, x, 8) "the principal fruits of the land"; and it is said by travelers that "many houses are entirely covered with vines and are hidden almost entirely behind fig trees." **Pomegranate tree**—The Scripture references to the pomegranate are very numerous (Num. xiii, 23; xx, 5; Deut. viii, 8; 1 Sam. xiv, 2; Song of Songs iv, 3, 13). It is a shrub or low tree, from ten to fifteen feet high, with small dark green foliage; the fruit is about the size of an orange, with a hard rind, yellowish or brownish, with a blush of red; it is filled with numerous seeds, each enveloped in bright red pulp, whence the Latin and English names *grained apple*. The fruit is of two varieties, the sweet and the acid. The pulp is most refreshing to the taste; the juice of the acid kind is sweetened as a beverage (Song of Songs viii, 2), and is also used in salads. The name "Gath-rimmon" (Josh. xxi, 25) signifies *winepress of the pomegranate*, and implies that the winepresses of the city were used for the making of pomegranate wine. The rind and bark and outer part of the root are valued for the tannin which they contain. The pomegranate is highly prized and extensively cultivated even now. (See Van Lennep, *Bible Lands*, 140f.; Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, ii, 392). **Palm tree**—The palm tree has existed "since prehistoric times over a vast area in the dry warm zone which extends from Senegal to the basin of the Indus, chiefly between the fifteenth to thirtieth degrees of latitude." It is uncertain where it was cultivated first, but there is sufficient evidence to show that it was cultivated very early in Babylonia, Egypt, and Arabia. In Syria, including Palestine, the tree seems to have been common; the name Phœnicia is thought by some to be connected with its Greek name. The coin struck at Rome to commemorate the capture of Jerusalem in 70 A. D. represented a weeping woman, the symbol of the country, sitting under a palm tree, with the inscription *Judæa capta*. At present palm trees are not found in great numbers in Syria except in the plain of Philistia, in the neighborhood of Beirût, and near Jericho. *Tāmār*, the word used here, is the name of the date palm, a tree consisting of a single stem or trunk fifty to sixty feet high, without a branch, and "crowned at the summit by a cluster or tuft of leaves that droop and shape themselves somewhat in the form of an umbrella." The uses of the palm are numerous. The leaves are useful for covering the roofs and sides of houses, for fences, mats, and baskets. The palm yields "an excellent kind of honey, not much inferior in sweetness to other honey" (Josephus, *Wars*, iv, viii, 3). The fruit grows in large clusters which hang from the trunk, and it constitutes an important article of food. Even the stony seeds are ground and yield nourishment for the camels. Old Testament references to the palm trees are frequent. (See Van Lennep, *Bible Lands*, 146ff.; Tristram, *Natural History of the Bible*, 378ff.) **The apple tree**—Heb. *tappûaḥ*. Opinions vary as to the tree designated by this name. It has been identified with the quince, the citron, the orange, the apricot, and the apple. To decide the question we must examine the references to the tree in the Old Testament, that we may see which one meets all the conditions. According to Song of Songs ii, 3, it must be a majestic tree suitable to sit under; according to viii, 5, its branches must expand sufficiently to overshadow a tent or a house; according to ii, 3, its fruit must be pleasant to the taste; according to vii, 8, its smell must be desirable; according to ii, 5, it must refresh the weary. Tristram (pp. 334ff.) declares that it cannot be the apple, "for though that fruit is cultivated with success in the higher parts of Lebanon, out of the boundaries of the Holy Land, yet it barely exists in the country itself. . . . The climate is far too hot for the apple

also, and the apple tree, *even* all the trees of the field, are withered: because [p]joy is withered away from the sons of men. 13 [q]Gird your-

[p] Isa. 24. 11; Jer. 48. 33; see Psa. 4. 7; Isa. 9. 3.——[q] Verse 8; Jer. 4. 8.

tree. There is one fruit, however, that meets all the requirements of the context, and the only one which does so—the apricot." Nevertheless, it is doubtful if the apricot would be mentioned as a fruit of special fragrance; nor is it used above others to refresh the weary. The quince cannot be meant, for its fruit is sour, never sweet. The citron was introduced into Palestine probably later than Old Testament times; so also the orange. Notwithstanding Tristram's statement, there seems no serious objection to identifying the *tappûah* with the apple, for, as G. E. Post says, "The apple fulfills all the conditions perfectly; it is a fruit tree which often attains a large size, is planted in orchards and near houses, and is a special favorite of the people in Palestine and Syria. It is true that the fruit of the Syrian apple is far inferior to that of Europe, and especially to that of America; nevertheless it is a favorite with all the people, and in a few places fine varieties have been introduced and thriven well. . . . They have the aroma of the better kinds, and it is for this quality that they are most prized. It is very common, when visiting a friend, to have an apple handed to you just to smell" (article "Apple," Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible;* Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, ii, 328, 329). The trees mentioned by name are the most precious, but they are not the only ones that have suffered; all the trees of the field are withered—The verb might be used of the devastation by the locusts; so Jerome, "All trees, whether fruit-bearing or not, are consumed by the destructive locusts"; but, as Credner first suggested, it may have reference to the effects of a drought accompanying the plague of locusts (17–20). The last clause of verse 12 is rendered better, "yea, joy is vanished from the sons of men." It emphasizes at once the effect of the general destruction and the cause of the universal lamentation. The joy is the rejoicing in anticipation of the harvest and of the vintage, and at those seasons of the year (Hos. ix, 1). There will be neither harvest nor vintage. Is withered—Or, *is vanished.* The same verb is translated in verse 10, "dried up"; in verse 11, "be ashamed"; in verse 12, "dried up": a play upon words throughout. Literally, *showeth shame.* As a person whose nature it is to be running over with gladness is ashamed of his hilarity in the presence of grief and withdraws, so rejoicing, out of place in the midst of this calamity, vanishes.

13, 14. The affliction is not removed by lamentation and mourning; on the contrary, in the prophet's mind it is but beginning. To him it is a sign of the approaching day of Jehovah, a day of terror to Israel because of the people's rebellion against God. There is but one means to drive away the present calamity and to avert the one still in the future, namely, repentance and supplication. The prophet, therefore, proceeds to call upon the priests and the people to institute a day of fasting and prayer; in 13, 14 the weeping priests (verse 9) are exhorted to put off their festal garments and clothe themselves in the garment of mourning—sackcloth—and, as the spiritual leaders, to gather the people to a solemn assembly, for prayer and penitence (compare Isa. xxxii, 12). Gird yourselves—With sackcloth (8). The wearing of sackcloth by the priests, dressed ordinarily in their peculiar festal garments, would add solemnity to the occasion. Lament—Not the common Hebrew word (8), but the verb used elsewhere especially of mourning for the dead; therefore expressive of intense grief. LXX., "smite yourselves" (Isa. xxxii, 12)—that is, upon the breast. Among the

selves, and lament, ye priests: howl, ye ministers of the altar: come, lie all night in sackcloth, ye ministers of my God: for [r]the meat offering and the drink offering is with-

[r] Verse 9.—[s] 2 Chron. 20. 3, 4; chap. 2. 15, 16.

holden from the house of your God.

14 [s]Sanctify ye a fast, call [t]a [4]solemn assembly, gather the elders *and* [u]all the inhabitants of the land

[t] Lev. 23. 36.—[4] Or, day of *restraint.*—[u] 2 Chron. 20. 13.

ancients external expressions of grief were much more common than among more highly civilized peoples, though their grief was not necessarily more real or intense. Ordinarily grief was expressed by the tearing of the outer garment (ii, 13), the smiting of the breast, the wringing of the hands, deep sighs and loud wailing. Certainly to the prophet these external expressions were only to symbolize the heart-sorrow (ii, 13). **Ministers of the altar**—Parallel to "Jehovah's ministers" (verse 9; compare Ezek. xlv, 4). Wearing the sackcloth the priests are to come to the temple and there **lie all night**—The verb means not necessarily "lie," but also simply "remain." That seems to be the thought here; the prophets are to wear the sackcloth and offer supplications, without interruption day or night, as long as the condition of the land calls for such service (ii, 17; compare 1 Kings xxi, 27; 2 Kings xix, 1). **Ministers** (or, *servants*) **of my God**—The God whom I serve, in whose name I speak, and "from whom I can promise you a hearing." The reason for this appeal is the same as that for the lamentation in verse 9—the cessation of the daily sacrifice, which is regarded as the greatest calamity. To this personal appeal is added an earnest exhortation that the priests should arrange for a public day of penitence and prayer in order that the people might be impressed more strongly with the belief that the national calamity was a punishment from God, and that a return to him in sincerity of heart was the only means of turning it aside. **Sanctify**—In the use of the verb *qaddēsh* in this connection appears the primary meaning of the verb, *to set apart,* that is, from that which is profane; hence, *appoint.* **A fast**—Fasting in a religious sense is the voluntary abstinence from food, expressive of sorrow and penitence. The origin of the custom is not quite clear from the Old Testament, though it was very widespread. It was practiced during the period of mourning (1 Sam. xxxi, 13; 2 Sam. i, 12), especially on the occasion of great calamities (Judg. xx, 26; 1 Sam. vii, 6; 2 Sam. xii, 16); for it was thought that in this manner the divine favor could be secured. Fasting was to symbolize a spiritual condition, the earnest yearning of the heart which finds expression in right doing (ii,13; Isa. lviii). In the later period this inner, spiritual significance was lost sight of, and it was thought that the painstaking observance of the form was sufficient to secure the desired ends. It is this overemphasis of the external which accounts for passages such as Matt. xi, 18, 19; xv, 11; xvii, 21. **Call a solemn assembly**—Extend the call to a public religious gathering, an hour of prayer. It is interesting to compare with this passage Isa. i, 13; Amos v, 21. Everyone is to participate in these solemn exercises. **Elders** ["old men"]—Since a distinction is made between old men and all the inhabitants of the land, it is probable, if not certain, that the old men are the *elders* in an official sense (Gen. l, 7; Josh. ix, 11, etc.; not so in i, 2; ii, 16). The elders, while holding official positions, were in religious matters subject to the priests. Kuenen, Merx, and others give a different meaning to the passage; they regard *elders* as a vocative, *inhabitants* as the object: the elders are to gather the inhabitants. But the first interpretation is to be preferred. The purpose of it all is to cry to Jehovah from the depths of the heart, that he may have mercy, remove the present

into the house of the LORD your God, and cry unto the LORD, 15 [x]Alas for the day! for [y]the day of the LORD *is* at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come. 16 Is not the meat cut off

[x] Jer. 30. 7.——[y] Isa. 13. 6, 9; chap. 2. 1.

calamity, and withhold the further blow.

15–20. Not a petition which the prophet puts into the mouths of the priests, but the prophet's own words, explaining the seriousness of the calamity and thus presenting the reason for the appeal in 13, 14. The wail turns into a supplication in verse 19. The terror of the prophet is increased, because he sees in the present calamity the forerunner of the day of Jehovah—Among the Hebrews, as frequently among the Arabs, the word *day* is sometimes used in the definite sense *day of battle* (Isa. ix, 4). This is the sense of the word in the common Old Testament phrase, *day of Jehovah* (Amos v, 18; Isa. ii, 12–21; Zeph. i, 7, etc.). We first meet the expression in Amos v, 18, where the prophet condemns the popular conception of it. The day of Jehovah is essentially a day of battle, on which Jehovah will manifest himself in the destruction of his foes and the exaltation of his friends; but there are differences in the statements concerning the extent of the conflict and concerning the persons who constitute the enemies of Jehovah. At the time of Amos the popular mind identified the enemies of Israel with the enemies of Jehovah; while the day of Jehovah would mark the destruction of these, to Israel it would be a day of glory and triumph. This misapprehension the prophet seeks to remove. He points out that the day would not necessarily be a day of triumph for Israel; its character would depend entirely upon their moral condition, for on his day Jehovah would vindicate his righteousness against sin, whether among foreign nations or among his own people. Sometimes Jehovah is thought of as employing human agents to strike the decisive blow, at other times he strikes the blow himself (Schultz, *Old Testament Theology*, ii, 354ff.; *Encyclopædia Biblica*, article "Eschatology," 34ff.; Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible*, i, 735ff.). The day does not bring final destruction to all; it is followed by a period of permanent felicity for the pious; it is therefore the threshold of the Messianic age. In this verse we have the same thought that we find in Amos, that the chosen people are not necessarily excluded from the terrors of the day; they will be spared only on condition of repentance. **At hand**—See ii, 1; iii, 14; compare Zeph. i, 7, 14; Obad. 15; Isa. xiii, 6; Ezek. xxx, 3. The near approach of the great judgment was often suggested by a great political crisis; the onward sweep of the Scythians (Zeph. i, 7), the struggles around Babylon (Isa. xiii, 6), the operations of Nebuchadrezzar (Ezek. xxx, 3). To Joel the suggestion came from the plague of locusts, but he does not identify this plague with the day itself. **As a destruction from the Almighty**—In the original a very effective play upon words: *shōdh*, destruction, *shadday*, almighty. Driver seeks to retain the play by rendering "overpowering from the overpowerer"; Rueckert gives a somewhat free rendering in German: "Graussen vom grossen Gott." **As a destruction**—Not a comparison such as is marked ordinarily by *as;* it is here the so-called *kaph veritatis*, used where the comparison is to be emphasized; equivalent to *in every respect like* (G.-K., 118x). The day of Jehovah will be in every respect like a blow from the Almighty, in suddenness, strength, and effect. **Almighty**—A translation of the Greek παντωκράτωρ, supposed to be a translation of the Hebrew *shadday*, used here purposely because of its similarity in sound with *shōdh*. The etymology of the Hebrew word is obscure. Some

before our eyes, *yea,* [z]joy and gladness from the house of our God?

[z] See Deut. 12. 6, 7; 16. 11, 14, 15.

think that it comes from the verb *shādhāh,* overpower, treat with violence, destroy; if so, the name would represent God as powerful, or as the destroyer. There are several other explanations; the one sure to become popular connects the word with the Assyrian *shadû,* mountain, and renders *ēl shadday,* "God, my mountain" (Delitzsch), or "God of the two mountains"—that is, heaven and earth (Radau). Isa. xiii, 6, is almost identical with this verse, which may be dependent upon the former, or the expression may have been a popular saying, a proverb, used by both authors independently.

In justification of his fear the prophet points in verses 16ff. to the awful condition of the country. Verse 16 expresses two thoughts, one touching the physical, the other the religious life. Physical life is threatened because the fields are devastated, so that there can be no harvest. **Before our eyes**—We have to watch the process of destruction and can do nothing to prevent it. Helplessness on the part of the observer seems always implied in the Hebrew expression (Isa. i, 7; Deut. xxviii, 31; Psa. xxiii, 5). The calamity has a more serious aspect because of its effect upon the religious cult: the communion between the people and Jehovah is broken; therefore he also cannot help (9). **Joy and gladness**—The joy of the religious gatherings and of the presentation of the first fruits. These were to be offered at the temple with rejoicing (Deut. xxvi, 1–11). The more plentiful the harvest the greater the rejoicing; the freewill offerings can no longer be presented, and the joyful feasts accompanying them can no longer be held; the rejoicing of the feast of weeks and of the feast of tabernacles (Deut. xvi, 9–15) is made impossible; all is sadness and lamentation.

17 The [5]seed is rotten under their clods, the garners are laid desolate,

[5] Heb. *grains.*

The interpretation of verse 17 is made difficult by the presence of at least four uncommon words and the disagreement among the ancient versions; the general thought, however, is clear. Evidently there is reference to a drought accompanying the plague of locusts. **Is rotten**—Better, *shriveled.* The Hebrew verb is found only here in the Old Testament. The translation of A. V. is adopted from mediæval Jewish commentators, who compared the verb with a similar one in Arabic; but *rot* would presuppose excessive moisture, which is contrary to the context; another similar Arabic verb suggests the meaning *to contract* (the forehead), *wrinkle,* which would correctly describe the effects of drought upon the seed. It shrivels, and thus loses its germinating power. The Hebrew words for "seed" and "clods" also occur only here. About the meaning of the former there can be no doubt, and through comparison with the Arabic the translation "clod" seems well established, though the rendering "shovel" (Driver) is not without justification. A calamity of this character would destroy the harvest for a second year (ii, 25). Merx, who takes exception to all these uncommon words in a single verse, after careful consideration (pp. 101ff.) suggests the following translation of verse 17 and the first clause of verse 18: "The cattle stamp at their cribs; the garners are laid desolate, the winepresses are broken down, for the grain is not, grapes and olives are lost. What should we place in them?" There does not seem to be sufficient justification for these radical emendations. **Garners**—The places where the grain is stored. **Are laid desolate**—Because all that has been stored there has been used, and since the grain is shriveled in the ground there will be no harvest the following year; therefore the garners are allowed to go to

the barns are broken down; for the corn is withered. 18 How do [a]the beasts groan: the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture; yea, the flocks of sheep are made desolate. 19 O LORD, [b]to thee will I cry: for [c]the fire hath devoured the [e]pastures of the wilderness, and the flame hath burned all the trees of the field. 20 The beasts of the field [d]cry also unto thee: for [e]the rivers of waters are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness.

[a] Hos. 4. 3.—[b] Psa. 50. 15.—[c] Jer. 9. 10; chap. 2. 3.

[e] Or, *habitations.*—[d] Job 38. 4 1; Psa. 104. 21; 145. 15.—[e] 1 Kings 17. 7; 18. 5.

ruin. **Barns**—The Hebrew word is used only here; a similar one meaning *barn* is in Hag. ii, 19; probably a synonym to "garner." Whether separate sections for the preservation of various kinds of grain or fruit are intended (Credner) is not certain. **The corn** ["grain"] **is withered**—This gives the reason for the condition of the garners; the same word as in verse 11.

18. Even the irrational animal world cries out in agony. **How do the beasts groan!**—Or, *sob.* Everyone knows that the cattle do not sob, but in a style like that of Joel such highly poetic personification is perfectly permissible. The fact that the verb is used nowhere else of animals is hardly sufficient reason for doubting its genuineness; it serves its purpose well; we can almost see the agony of the cattle and hear their sobs. The reading of the Septuagint, "What shall we lay up in them?"—that is, the garners of verse 17 (accepted as original by some scholars)—is a weak close of verse 17, and rests upon a misunderstanding of the Hebrew. **The herds of cattle are perplexed**—They look in vain for food, perplexed they huddle together, or go back and forth not knowing how to still their hunger, since the drought has withered the pastures. For "are perplexed" LXX. reads "weep," which would make a good parallel to "sob." **Yea, the flocks of sheep**—Intended for a climax; the sheep do not require as rich pasture as the cattle, yet even their limited wants cannot be supplied. **Are made desolate**—Literally, *suffer punishment,* or, *are held guilty.* In poetic style it may be permissible to speak of the animal world as suffering for sins committed by men, but the expression is peculiar. The translators have felt the difficulty, for they translate the Greek rather than the Hebrew, and most commentators follow LXX.

Overcome by the awful sight, the prophet in 19, 20 sends up to God an agonizing cry for deliverance. He seems to be prompted chiefly by the sufferings of the irrational, therefore guiltless, brute creation; the people deserve the blow. **To thee**—No one else can help, but Jehovah "preserveth man and beast" (Psa. xxxvi, 6). **Will I cry**—Better, *do I cry.* **Fire . . . flame**—Might be two figures for the excessive heat of the sun: like fire the rays consume the meadows and even scorch the trees; or simply a poetic description of the ravages of the locusts (ii, 3). Modern travelers do compare the ravages of the locusts to the destruction wrought by fire: "Whatever of herb or leaf they gnaw is, as it were, scorched by fire." "I myself have observed that the places where they had browsed were as scorched as if the fire had passed there." "They covered a square mile so completely that it appeared, at a little distance, to have been burned and strewed over with brown ashes." (See also Pusey, on ii, 3.) It is not impossible, however, that the prophet has in mind an actual fire or conflagration, for these are not uncommon in Palestine during very dry summers. "Throughout the summer the prairie and forest fires are not uncommon; the grass and thistle of the desert will blaze for miles. (G. A. Smith, *Historical Geography of the Holy Land,* 66). **Wilderness**—The English word suggests ideas that are entirely foreign to the Hebrew. The notion of a

CHAPTER II.

[a]BLOW ye the [1]trumpet in Zion, and [b]sound an alarm in my

[a] Verse 15; Jer. 4. 5.—[1] Or, *cornet.*—[b] Num. 10. 5, 9.

sandy waste must be banished. The Hebrew word designates a tract of land to which herds are driven, an uncultivated region, but one where pasturage, however scanty, may be found; usually without a settled population, although in certain districts there may be cities and towns occupied by nomads (Josh. xv, 61, 62; Isa. xlii, 11). In verse 18 the agony of the domestic animals is described, in verse 20 that of the wild animals. **The beasts of the field**—They join the prophet in his petition, for they also are about to perish. **Cry**—Better, with R. V., "pant"; literally, *ascend,* with longing and desire, that God may turn away the affliction so that they may satisfy their hunger and their thirst. Even the wild beasts, though they can roam over a large territory, can find nothing to satisfy them. As a result of the continued drought the *rivers* (better, as R. V., "water brooks") have run dry. The word really means *channel,* and refers to the water bed rather than to the water. During the rainy season in Palestine "every highland gorge, every lowland valley bed, is filled with a roaring torrent," but during the dry season most of these river beds run dry; only a few of the streams are perennial. In the calamity described by Joel there are no exceptions, all are dried up. The address is rhetorically rounded off by the repetition of a clause from verse 19.

CHAPTER II.

THE SCOURGE THE FORERUNNER OF THE DAY OF JEHOVAH; HIGH TIME TO REPENT, ii, 1–17.

Several expositors see in the locusts of ii, 1–11, a swarm different from that described in chapter i. Credner thinks that the swarm of chapter i appeared in the fall, and on its de-

holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for [c]the day of the LORD cometh, for *it is*

[c] Chap. 1. 15; Obad. 15; Zeph. 1. 14, 15.

parture left eggs which, in the following spring, were hatched out, and so formed an even more numerous host. It is more likely, however, that we have to do with only one swarm. The difference in the description is due to the fact that in chapter i the prophet is concerned primarily with the calamity already wrought; only briefly does he touch upon its deeper significance (15). In ii, 1–11, the same scourge of locusts is in his mind, but now he thinks of it chiefly as the immediate precursor of the terrible day of Jehovah. Chapter ii, 1–17, therefore, is an expansion of i, 14, 15. This apocalyptic significance of the locusts accounts for the highly poetic description of the swarms which, likened to a hostile army, are called the army of Jehovah coming to judgment (ii, 1–11). Although the command is already given there is still a possibility of mercy. If the people return to God with a contrite heart the calamity may yet be averted (12–14). The address closes with an earnest summons to the whole congregation to assemble for prayer and fasting in the house of God, and with instruction to the priests concerning the manner of their ministry (15–17).

1. By the blowing of the horn the priests are to warn the people (Amos iii, 6) of the near approach of the day of Jehovah and to gather them into the temple to pray. The latter thought is not expanded until verse 15. **Trumpet**—Better, *horn.* See on *cornet,* Hos. v, 8. Evidently the priests are addressed, which would indicate that the signal was intended also to summon the people to worship. Before speaking of the latter the prophet describes the calamity that calls for penitence and prayer. **Zion**—One of the hills on which Jerusalem stood. First mentioned as a Jebusite

nigh at hand; 2 [d]A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: [e]a great people and a strong; [f]there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, *even* to the years [2]*of* many generations.

[d] Amos 5. 18, 20.——[e] Verses 5, 11, 25; chap. 1. 6.

[f] Exod. 10.14.——[2] Heb. *of generation and generation.*

fortress which David captured, and whose name he changed into *City of David.* Its exact location is still a matter of dispute. Christian tradition identifies it with the southwest spur, but it was more likely in the southeast. After the building of the temple the name was extended so as to include the temple hill; so here. The signal is to be given from the top of the temple mount, so as to be heard far and wide. **Holy mountain**—Called holy because it was separated as the dwelling place of the Holy One of Israel (Psa. ii, 6; see on Hos. xi, 9; Zech. xiv, 20). **Tremble**—It is high time to awake from careless indifference, for this is not an ordinary calamity; it forebodes the near approach of the day of Jehovah (i, 15).

In order to make more effective the appeal which is to follow, the prophet pictures in 2ff. the terror of the day as signalized by the present calamity. The first half of the verse is closely connected with verse 1, it describes the day as a day of **darkness . . . gloominess . . . clouds . . . thick darkness**—Four synonyms, for the sake of emphasis—intense, impenetrable darkness (Zeph. i, 15; Ezek. xxxiv, 12). Three of the words are used in Deut. iv, 11, of the darkness in which Sinai was enveloped when Jehovah descended upon it in fire; the fourth is applied in Exod. x, 22, to the plague of darkness. Darkness is in the Old Testament a very common figure for calamity (Isa. v, 30; viii, 22; ix, 2); here it is a very appropriate picture, for all writers agree in speaking of locusts as clouds darkening the sun. "These creatures do not come in legions, but in whole clouds. . . . All the air is full and darkened when they fly. Though the sun shine ever so bright, it is no brighter than when most clouded." "Soon after my arrival at Barosh I saw a swarm of locusts extending a mile in length and half a mile in width. They appeared in the distance like a black cloud. When they came nearer from the east the black swarm darkened the rays of the sun and cast a dark shadow like an eclipse" (Forbes). **As the morning**—Better, R. V., "dawn." This does not belong to the preceding; it opens the description of the present calamity, which is not the day itself, only the dawn. **As**—See on i, 15. It is in every respect like the dawn, because (1) as the dawn introduces the day, so the present calamity marks the beginning of the day of Jehovah; (2) the reflection of the sunlight from the wings of the locusts produces a glimmer that may be likened to the light of dawn. "The day before the arrival of the locusts we could infer that they were coming from a yellow reflection in the sky, proceeding from their yellow wings. As soon as the light appeared no one had the slightest doubt that an enormous swarm of locusts was approaching" (Alvarez). (3) Whether there is the additional thought that the locusts came from the east, where the dawn becomes first visible, is doubtful. **Spread upon the mountains**—Not in apposition to "day" (A. V.), nor is *pārûs*, "spread out," the predicate of an indefinite subject (Keil); it is rather the predicate of the subject "a great people and a strong"; so that the whole sentence should be read, "Like dawn lies spread out upon the mountain a great people and a strong" (verse 5). **People**—The army of verse 11 and of verse 25, the swarms of locusts (i, 4). The rest of verse 2 points back to i, 2. The present calamity has no analogy in the past, no

3 [g]A fire devoureth before them; and behind them a flame burneth: the land *is* as [h]the garden of Eden before them, [i]and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them. 4 [k]The appearance of them *is* as the appearance of horses; and as horsemen, so shall

[g] Chap. 1. 19, 20.—[h] Gen. 2. 8; 13. 10; Isa. 51. 3.—[i] Zech. 7. 14.—[k] Rev. 9. 7.

matter how far back one goes; nor will it ever be equaled in the future; it stands out unique and without parallel (Exod. x, 14). It is because of the enormity of the plague that Joel regards it as the forerunner of the final judgment, and it is on this account that he uses the hyperbolical expressions.

The destructiveness of the great and powerful people is further described in verse 3. All is lost; the beautiful country has become a wasted desert. **Fire . . . before . . . behind them a flame**—Literally, *him*, or *it*, the swarm of locusts. Like fire the locusts have swept over the country; whatever was in their way they have devoured, they have left behind nothing but destruction and ruin (compare comment on i, 19). A most appropriate figure. "A few months afterward a much larger army alighted and gave the whole country the appearance of having been burned." "Wherever they settled it looks as if fire had devoured and burned up everything" (Forbes). "It is better to have to do with the Tartars than with these destructive animals; you would think that fire follows their track" (Volney). "Bamboo groves have been stripped of their leaves and left standing like saplings after a rapid bush fire, and grass has been devoured so that the bare ground appeared as if burned" (G. A. Smith, *The Book of the Twelve*, 403; also Tristram, 316). The following expression emphasizes the destructiveness still more: before them the land was **as the garden of Eden**—Fertile, rich in verdure, pleasant to look upon (Gen. ii, 8ff.). A similar comparison of the *restored* land with the garden of Eden is found in Ezek. xxxvi, 35; our passage may be dependent on that in Ezekiel, though not necessarily. **Desolate wilderness**—Such as Egypt and Edom will become (iii, 19; compare Jer. xii, 10). **Nothing shall escape**—Better, R. V., "none hath escaped." The future tenses in verses 3–11 should be rendered, as in R. V., as present or past tenses, describing a condition present to the prophet and his listeners.

4–11. Having described in general terms the destructiveness of the people great and strong, the prophet pictures most vividly the appearance of the host and its terrible advance. The locusts he compares to horses (4), the noise accompanying the advance to the noise of advancing armies and of a consuming fire (5), producing terror wherever they go (6), their attack to the attack of a well-equipped, well-organized army (7–9); even the sky is darkened (10); surely the day of Jehovah is at hand (11). The prophet has been so successful in his description that the thing compared and the object to which it is compared have been confused, and the locusts have been regarded as mere symbols of a hostile army (compare above, pp 142ff).

4. **As . . . horses**—The head of the locust bears a strong resemblance to the head of a horse, as Theodoret (c. 450 A. D.) remarked: "If you carefully consider the head of the locust you will find it exceedingly like that of a horse." Tristram, referring to this passage, says, "To this day the same metaphor is familiar in every Arab camp. One of my Arabs gave me a long list of reasons why the locust is like the horse or horseman." It is this similarity that explains one of the German words for locust, *Heupferd* (hay-horse). Not only in appearance, but also in rapidity of motion, locusts resemble horses. For A. V. "horsemen" read margin of R. V., "war-horses." In verse 5 the noise accompanying the advance of the innumerable *horses* is

they run. 5 [1]Like the noise of chariots on the tops of mountains shall they leap, like the noise of a flame of fire that devoureth the stubble, [m]as a strong people set in battle

[1] Rev. 9. 9.——[m] Verse 2.——[n] Jer. 8. 21;

compared to the rattling of chariots —Low two-wheeled vehicles used for military and other purposes. Chariots were not adapted to the hills of Palestine, but the Canaanites used them in the valleys (Josh. xvii, 16; Judg. iv, 3). They were common also among other ancient nations. The Persians armed the axles and sometimes the tongue with scythes, and such chariots were known in Palestine during the Seleucidan period (2 Macc. xiii, 2). For an expansion of this picture compare Rev. ix, 7ff. **On the tops of mountains**—Not to be connected with "chariots," for chariots cannot well be used on the mountains, but with **they leap**—The locusts are seen to approach over the mountains, and "they come so near the top of the mountains that they seem to leap over them rather than to fly." The noise meant is the indistinct sound heard in the distance; the next comparison brings them nearer. Travelers compare the noise made by the wings of the locusts to the blowing of a wind, the rush of a torrent, the roar of the sea. "The noise made by them in marching and foraging was like that of a heavy shower falling upon a distant forest" (Thomson).

Having pictured the locusts approaching from the distance, he now describes them as they are devouring herbs, plants, shrubs, and trees. **Flame**—The noise made while eating is like the noise of a flame that sweeps over a dry field. **Stubble**—Fires during the dry season are not uncommon in Palestine (i, 19; Isa. v, 24; Amos vii, 4); sometimes the stubbles are set on fire for purposes of fertilization. Our passage refers to fire, whatever its origin. **Strong people in battle array**—The point of comparison is not the noise, but the orderly steady ad-

array. 6 Before their face the people shall be much pained: [n]all faces shall gather [2]blackness. 7 They shall run like mighty men; they shall climb the wall like men of

Lam. 4. 8; Nah. 2. 10.——[2] Heb. *pot.*

vance. "Their number was astounding; the whole face of the mountain was black with them; on they came like a disciplined army" (Thomson). "They seemed to march in regular battalions, crawling over everything that lay in their passage" (Morier). The impression made is the same as that made by a hostile army. Everybody is terror-struck. **The people**—R. V., "the peoples." Neither is correct; the Hebrew has no article—"peoples," that is, whole nations. **Shall be much pained**—Or, with R. V., "are in anguish," a very strong word, used especially of the anguish of women in travail (Deut. ii, 5; Isa. xiii, 8; Mic. iv, 9). Hardly an exaggeration, for locusts do cause immense loss of property and are responsible for disastrous famines. "In Algiers after an invasion of locusts in 1866 two hundred thousand persons are said to have perished from famine" (Driver). "The Bedouins who occupy the Sinaitic peninsula are frequently driven to despair by the multitudes of locusts" (Burkhardt). **All faces . . . gather blackness**—So Targum, Peshitto, Vulgate, and a few later writers, but an impossible translation of the Hebrew; better, R. V., "all faces are waxed pale"; literally, *all faces draw in redness*, that is, beauty, healthy color. As a result of terror the blood leaves the face and returns to the inward parts of the body; only paleness remains (Jer. xxx, 6).

7–10. The comparison with a well-equipped army is taken up again and carried further; the advance is irresistible; there is no confusion or disorder in their ranks; they climb the highest walls; they penetrate the inmost recesses of the houses. They . . . **run**—To the assault; advance,

war; and they shall march every one on his ways, and they shall not break their ranks: 8 Neither shall one thrust another; they shall walk every one in his path: and *when* they fall upon the [4]sword, they shall not be wounded. 9 They shall run to and fro in the city; they shall run upon the wall, they shall climb up upon the houses; they shall [o]enter

[4] Or, *dart.*—[o] Jer. 9. 21.

charge (Psa. xviii, 29; Job xv, 26). There is no delay (verse 4); if they have decided upon a point of attack they carry out their plan; nothing can impede their progress; walls they climb like men of war. They do not get into one another's way, they advance straight ahead, without turning to the right or left. An admirable description of the advance of locusts (compare remark on verse 4). Jerome says: "When the swarms of locusts come and fill the whole atmosphere between earth and sky, they fly, according to the appointment of the commanding God, in such order that they preserve an exact shape, just like the squares drawn upon a tessellated pavement, not diverging on either side by, so to speak, so much as a finger's breadth. . . . There is no road impassable to locusts; they penetrate into fields, and crops, and trees, and cities, and houses, and even the recesses of the bedchambers." So also Theodoret: "You may see the locusts like a hostile army ascending the walls, and advancing the roads, not suffering any difficulty to disperse them, but steadily moving forward as if according to some concerted plan." **And when they fall upon the sword, they shall not be wounded**—Better, R. V., "and they burst through the weapons, and break not off *their course.*" No resistance is effective; they throw themselves upon the weapons and pass on without being disturbed or confused. Some may be wounded and drop, but the great mass continues in regular order. This is a better interpretation than that implied in the translation, "They did not cut themselves to pieces" (Keil), or "without being wounded" (Von Orelli). The verse would seem to imply that the people were accustomed to meet the locusts with weapons to fight them off; and that is actually done, according to the statements of some travelers. "Both in Asia and Europe they sometimes take the field against the locusts with all the implements of war" (Hasselquist). "The guard of the Red Town attempted to stop their irruption into Transylvania by firing at them; and indeed when the balls and shot went through the swarm they gave way and divided; but having filled up their ranks in a moment they proceeded on their journey" (quoted by Pusey). Thomson also speaks of the impossibility of stopping their progress: "We dug trenches and kindled fires, and beat and burned to death heaps upon heaps, but the effort was utterly hopeless." Livy and Pliny seem to have known of similar methods of fighting the locusts. **Sword**—R. V., "weapons"; Heb. *shelaḥ;* not the ordinary word for weapon, but one used only in late writings; it seems to have been a weapon that was extended or held in front.

Held back by nothing, the host (9) forces its way into the city. **They shall run to and fro in the city**—Heb. *shāqaq;* literally, *drive, impel to run,* then, *run hither and thither;* here not, "they run to and fro in the city" after mastering it (A. V., Driver, Hitzig), but "they throw themselves upon the city" (Isa. xxxiii, 4; Nah. ii, 4). Again they are successful; they run upon the wall, yea, they get into the houses themselves. On verse 9 Theodoret makes this comment: "And this we have frequently seen done, not merely by hostile armies but also by locusts, which not only when flying but by creeping along the walls penetrate into dwellings by the light holes."

in at the windows [p]like a thief. **10** [q]The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: [r]the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining: **11** [s]And the LORD shall utter his voice before [t]his army: for his camp *is* very great: [u]for *he is* strong that executeth his word: for the [x]day of the LORD *is* great and very terrible; and [y]who can abide it?

[p] John 10. 1.—[q] Psa. 18. 7.—[r] Verse 31; Isa. 13. 10; Ezek. 32. 7; chap. 3. 15; Matt. 24. 29.—[s] Jer. 25. 30; chap. 3. 16; Amos 1. 2.—[t] Verse 25.—[u] Jer. 50. 34; Rev. 18. 8.—[x] Jer. 30. 7; Amos 5. 18; Zeph. 1. 15.—[y] Num. 24. 23; Mal. 3. 2.

"During the great plague of locusts in 1865 many inhabitants of Nazareth were compelled to leave their homes" (Riehm). **Windows**—Glass was and still is exceedingly scarce in the Orient, therefore expensive and used but rarely for windows; the latter consist ordinarily of lattice work, and serve also as chimneys out of which smoke may escape; so it was quite easy for locusts to creep through. **Like a thief**—Would hardly be said of a hostile army, but is true of the locusts.

With verse 10 a new start is made. The whole earth is terrified, for it becomes clear that the judgment is of unusual significance. The thought of the day of Jehovah becomes more prominent and influences the description to a large extent. **Before them**—The singular, as in verse 6, while the verbs in the preceding verses referring to the locusts are in the plural; yet the pronoun refers undoubtedly to the swarm of locusts which are looked upon as a unit. The preposition is not the same as in verse 6; in the latter causality is implied, here the phenomena spoken of may be regarded not as caused by the locusts, but simply accompanying them; it leaves it undecided whether the locusts of 2–9 or Jehovah (verse 11) is the cause. **The earth shall quake . . . the heavens shall tremble**—"It is not that the strength of the locusts is so great that it can move the heavens and shake the earth, but that, to those who suffer from such calamities, through the greatness of their own terror the heavens appear to shake and the earth to reel" (Jerome). **Shall be dark**—Heb. *kādhar*, "coal black"; not a particle of light is to be seen. The day of Jehovah is inaugurated by extraordinary phenomena in the sphere of nature (ii, 30, 31; iii, 15; Isa. xiii, 10, 13; Amos viii, 9). The locusts do darken the sky, but here the reference seems to be to something more—we are in the sphere of the apocalyptic—to the approach of Jehovah himself, before whom all nature stands in awe and terror. The thought of an actual earthquake, eclipse, or severe thunderstorm may have been in the mind of the prophet; but this is not certain, though the coming of Jehovah is often pictured in the imagery of a storm (Psa. xviii, 7ff.). The whole is a vivid picture of the terror that overcomes man and nature when it is discovered that Jehovah approaches for judgment. Jehovah is the leader of the hosts. **Utter his voice**—Of command; Heb. *nāthan qôl;* a very common Old Testament expression to designate thunder. Only so can he make himself understood, because the **camp is very great**—It stretches far into the distance, and the noise made by the locusts must be drowned; it is this vastness of the army also that makes it necessary to have a *divine* commander. The introduction of the next two clauses with "for" rather weakens the message of the prophet; they should be translated as exclamations (G.-K., 148d), emphasizing the vastness of Jehovah's army: "Yea, strong is he that executeth his word"—the army of locusts (2–9, 25), which carries out his command; "yea, the day of Jehovah." Here again the day cannot be identified with the calamity already experienced; it is still in the future, though near at hand. Already the wonderful phenomena that

12 Therefore also now, saith the LORD, [z]turn ye *even* to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning:
13 And [a]rend your heart, and not [b]your garments, and turn unto the

[z] Jer. 4. 1; Hos. 12. 6; 14. 1.—[a] Psa. 34. 18; 51. 17.

[b] Gen. 37. 34; 2 Sam. 1. 11; Job 1. 20.

announce the day are seen in the sky (verse 31; Mal. iv, 5). **Who can abide**—Or, *endure*. No one can stand its terrors. The forerunner has exhausted all resources, all strength. Complete annihilation threatens, unless somehow the final blow can be turned aside.

12–14. There is still hope. The door of mercy is open, and if the people turn to Jehovah in a spirit of penitence he may yet pardon. 12. **Therefore also now**—Better, R. V., "Yet even now." At the eleventh hour, when destruction seems imminent. **Saith Jehovah**—Literally, *whisper of Jehovah*. A very solemn asseveration, giving to the utterance special weight and demanding earnest attention. The expression is common in the prophetic books. "Whisper," Heb. *nā'ûm*, is a passive participle from a root "to utter a low sound"; hence, the whispered or murmured utterance of revelation that falls upon the mental ear. **Turn ye . . . to me**—Leave your self-chosen paths of rebellion, come to your senses, recognize me as your God, and follow my instruction. This is the appeal of all the great prophets (compare Hos. xiv, 1; Isa. i, 2; Amos iv, 6, etc.). *Turn* emphasizes the idea of conversion in its practical aspect. The exhortation indicates clearly the purpose of all the prophets in delivering their dark messages of judgment. The judgments themselves were primarily disciplinary; and the interpretations of these judgments by the prophets had for their sole object repentance and a return to God on the part of the people. But it is not to be merely a formal, external return. **With all your heart**—In Hebrew thought the heart is the seat not only of the emotions, but of all the powers of personality, intellect, sensibility, and will (Delitzsch, *System of Biblical Psychology*, 292ff.). It includes the entire activity of the human spirit; all thoughts, all affections, all volitions. These are to be centered upon Jehovah. In Deuteronomy the same thought is expressed by the phrase "with all thy heart and with all thy soul" (iv, 29; vi, 5, etc.). The heart turning manifests itself in outward signs of grief for past sins: **Fasting** (i, 14), . . . **weeping**, . . . **mourning**—The last literally, *beating the breast* (i, 9, 13, 14). In the emphasis on externals Joel differs greatly from the earlier prophets. To them fasting and the entire external ceremonial was of very little or no importance; but the statement, "It comes in the end to this, that *to repent* is equivalent to *to hold a day for fasting and prayer;* and that is the real goal of Joel in ii, 1–17, and i, 1–20; certainly along with it comes the exhortation: rend your heart, and not your garments; water alone cannot do it" (Wellhausen), does not recognize sufficiently the emphasis of the prophet upon *heart* repentance. He does not place exclusive emphasis upon externals. Lest the people should be satisfied with external, formal turning, the prophet repeats (verse 13) his summons to repentance, with even greater emphasis on the inner change. **Rend your heart, and not your garments**—The rending of the garment was among many ancient nations an expression of deep grief or terror. It was practiced in bereavement, as soon as the report of the death was received; the custom was weakened afterward to a conventional tearing of the garment at the breast for a hand's breadth (Josh. vii, 6; 2 Sam. iii, 31; compare Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible*, article "Mourning"). The mere tearing of the garments is not sufficient; for

LORD your God: for he *is* [c]gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil. 14 [d]Who knoweth *if* he

[c] Exod. 34. 6; Psa. 86. 5, 15; Jonah 4. 2.—[d] Josh. 14. 12; 2 Sam. 12. 22; 2 Kings 19. 4; Amos 5. 15; Jonah 3. 9; Zeph. 2. 3.

this reason the prophet insists most strongly on the spiritual conditions accompanying it. The rending of the heart signifies true contrition (Psa. li, 19; Ezek. xxxvi, 26; Jer. iv, 4).

They should be moved to such repentance by past experience, for Jehovah has shown himself to be **gracious**—Literally, *inclined*, that is, to pardon the repentant sinner. **Merciful**—Possessing mercy in abundance; equivalent to *full of compassion*, indicating the benevolent attitude of Jehovah toward all mankind, worthy and unworthy; his sympathy with man's miseries. **Slow to anger**—Literally, *long as to the breathing of the nostrils*, that is, in anger. He does not allow his anger to break forth immediately on the discovery of sin and shortcoming; he waits to see whether the sinner will repent and do better. **Of great kindness**—R. V., "abundant in loving-kindness." Heb. *hesedh;* used (1) of the love of God toward man, (2) of the love of man toward God, (3) of the love of man toward man (see on Hos. ii, 19); here, in the first sense, might be reproduced by *paternal affection*. It indicates the chief characteristic of God's dealings with men, especially with those who are needy and helpless; and thus it includes all the virtues spoken of before. Think, says the prophet, of the paternal affection manifested by Jehovah toward you in all your past history, and let that thought become so vivid that it will lead you to repentance. This description of the character of God is taken from Exod. xxxiv, 6. **Repenteth him**—Continuation of the description of the character of Jehovah. Better taken as a participle, translated by a relative clause, "and one who repents." The usual meaning of the verb *niham*, "to repent," is "to change one's mind or purpose out of pity for those whom one's actions have affected, or because the results of an action have not fulfilled expectations." That God repents is often stated in the Old Testament; this does not mean, however, that God ever changes his absolute will because he has been mistaken, or that he ever substitutes a worthier idea for one unworthy of his dignity. His essential attitude does not change, but the expression of God's character toward man depends upon man's attitude toward God. Now, since the announcement of a future manifestation of God is always conditional, its fulfillment depending upon the future attitude of man, cases may occur in which the announcement results in a complete change of attitude on the part of those doomed to destruction (compare Jonah and Nineveh). In such a case God may revoke the punishment in perfect accord with the immutability of his character. Such change on the part of the people is presupposed here. An unphilosophical, primitive people, whose apprehension of the infinite God was limited, must use expressions whose contents could be understood, though they were not literally true of God (Jer. xviii, 5–12; Jonah iii, 10). **The evil**—The evil that Jehovah has threatened to send as punishment of their guilt. In view of the merciful character of Jehovah the prophet hopes that even in this crisis there may be a withholding of further judgment, and the change of the present calamity into a blessing. 14. **Who knoweth**—Equivalent to *perhaps*. "He speaks after the manner of a terrified conscience that is lifted up again with difficulty after a season of affliction and begins to aspire after hope and the mercy of God. . . . The expression does not indicate doubt, but rather affirmation coupled with desire; as if we were to

will return and repent, and leave [e]a blessing behind him; *even* [f]a meat offering and a drink offering unto the LORD your God?

15 [g]Blow the trumpet in Zion, [h]sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: **16** Gather the people, [i]sanctify the congregation, [k]assemble the elders, [l]gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: [m]let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet. **17** Let

[e] Isa. 65. 8; Hag. 2. 19.—[f] Chap. 1. 9, 13.—[g] Verse 1; Num. 10. 3—[h] Chap. 1. 14.

[i] Exod. 19. 10, 22.—[k] Chap. 1. 14.—[l] 2 Chron. 20. 13.—[m] 1 Cor. 7. 5.

say, God will, if it please him, turn again" (Luther). A more confident expression might have made the people even more reckless. **Return**—Turn back from the judgment upon the execution of which he has already entered (verse 11). **Repent**—See on verse 13. That instead of devastation and ruin he will leave behind him a **blessing** can mean in this connection only removal of the locusts, cessation of the drought and the fire, and restoration of fertility. But the true significance of the new fertility lies not in supplying means for the sustenance of life, but in that it will make possible the resumption or continuation of the daily sacrifices and thus assure the continued presence of Jehovah (i, 9). The restoration of the daily sacrifice seems to be the greatest blessing desired. Fertility, harvest, vintage, are always in the Old Testament regarded as direct gifts from God (Hos. ii, 5ff.).

Verses 15–17 are an emphatic reiteration of the exhortation in i, 14. Verse 15 takes us back to verse 1, where the priests are exhorted to blow the trumpet. There it was intended to be chiefly a signal of danger, here a call to a religious gathering. 15b is a repetition of i, 14a. No one is to be excluded or excused from the proposed service; all are to take part. Even the smallest children are to join. Verse 16 is an expansion of i, 14b. **Gather the people**—In i, 14, "all the inhabitants of the land." The purpose of the gathering is indicated in the following expression: **Sanctify the congregation** ["assembly"]—Call a holy meeting of the congregation and consecrate the thus gathered people so that they can approach God properly (Exod. xix, 10; 1 Sam. xvi, 5). The act of consecration was external, but it signified an inner spiritual preparation (13). In order that none might consider themselves exempt, the people are precisely defined as old men, children, and sucklings. No one is free from sin, no one can escape the judgment; therefore no one can afford to stay away from the service of prayer. **Elders**—Better, R. V., "old men." Persons of old age (i, 2), not *elder* in an official sense (i, 14). **Those that suck the breasts**—"Nothing could evidence the deep and universal guilt of the entire nation more than the fact that on the great day of penitence and prayer even the newborn babes were to be brought together in the arms of their parents" (Umbreit). **Bridegroom . . . bride**—Even the newly wedded, who are least inclined to mourning, and who might possibly claim exemption (Deut. xxiv, 5), are to come forth and participate in the solemn worship. **Chamber** (Heb. *hedher*) . . . **closet** (Heb. *huppāh*)—The two words are to be understood as synonyms; the bride and groom are thought to be together in the bridal chamber or nuptial pavilion (Psa. xix, 5). A common Arabic phrase for the consummation of marriage is "he built a tent over his wife," and even to-day a special tent or hut is built for the bride on the night of marriage (W. R. Smith, *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia*, 167ff.).

It is the duty of the priests, who are the mediators between the community and God, to convey the petition to the throne of Jehovah; in verse 17 they are exhorted to discharge their duty in the religious gathering. **Weep**—In sorrow and repentance. **Be-**

the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep [n]between the porch and the altar, and let them say, [o]Spare thy people, O LORD, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should [5]rule over them: [p]wherefore should they say among the people, Where *is* their God?

[n] Ezek. 8. 16; Matt. 23. 35.—[o] Exod. 32. 11, 12; Deut. 9. 26–29.

[5] Or, *use a byword against them.*—[p] Psa. 42. 10; 79. 10; 115. 2; Mic. 7. 10.

tween the porch and the altar—As in Ezek. viii, 16. The *porch* is the *fore court* on the east side of the temple, twenty cubits long and ten cubits wide (1 Kings vi, 3), which separates the *inner court*, or court of the priests (1 Kings vi, 36; 2 Chron. iv, 9), from the *great court* (2 Chron. iv, 9) intended for the laity. In the court of the priests was the great altar of burnt offering, perhaps near the fore court and thus in sight of the people in the outer court (1 Kings viii, 64; 2 Chron. viii, 12). Here, with their faces turned toward the temple, they are to entreat Jehovah with tears. The prayer is prescribed by the prophet. **Spare**—Have mercy, and withhold further judgment. **Thy people . . . thine heritage**—The fact that Israel is the people, the heritage, of Jehovah is made the basis of appeal (Deut. ix, 26, 29); he should be intensely interested in their welfare. **Give not . . . to reproach**—To be an object of reproach and mockery. Again and again Jehovah is reminded that, should he forsake Israel and permit it to be destroyed, his own power would be called in question. **That the heathen** ["nations"] **should rule over them**—The greatest disgrace in the thoughts of the Jews was the fact of being governed by heathen nations, as is shown at a later period by their frequent revolts against the Roman power. The severity of the plague of locusts has exhausted their resources; in case of hostility the Jews would fall an easy prey to their enemies, and thus become an object of reproach. The above meaning is reproduced in the ancient versions and is adopted by some moderns; it is supported by Psa. cvi, 41; Deut. xv, 6; Lam. v, 8, and is in perfect accord with the context. For its bearing upon the allegorical interpretation see above, p. 145. Most commentators, however, favor the marginal reading, "use a byword against them." *Māshal be* means ordinarily "to rule over," but the other translation is possible, and the last clause of the verse rather favors it. (The claim of Merx, Nowack, and others, that the same construction is found in Ezek. xii, 23; xviii, 3, is not well founded; the preposition *be* is used there in a sense entirely different from that required here.) The country having been so severely afflicted, the surrounding nations might be tempted to mock the Jews, and declare that they were forsaken by their God, or that he had no power to help them (Exod. xxxii, 12; Num. xiv, 13–16). **Where is their God?**—A sneer at the covenant relation between Jehovah and his people to which Jehovah could not be indifferent. The ancients traced every extraordinary event directly to the deity. The prosperity of a people was evidence of the power of its God, and even surrounding nations would look up to such a deity with a feeling of respect. On the other hand, disaster was proof of the weakness of the deity, and he would be mocked (Isa. x, 10, 11; xxxvi, 18, 20). The only way to avoid such mockery is for Jehovah to avert the calamity (Exod. xxxii, 12; Psa. lxxix, 10).

With this appeal, presenting the strongest reason why God should avert the judgment, the first division of the book closes. The prayer was not in vain; Jehovah heard it, and turned in mercy and loving-kindness toward his penitent people.

PROMISE OF JEHOVAH TO AVERT THE JUDGMENT AND TO BESTOW ABUNDANT BLESSINGS, ii, 18–iii, 21.

Though not expressly stated, it is implied that the prophet's exhorta-

18 Then will the LORD [q]be jealous for his land, [r]and pity his people. 19 Yea, the LORD will answer and say unto his people, Behold, I will send you [s]corn, and wine, and oil, and ye shall be satisfied therewith: and I will no more make you a reproach among the heathen: 20 But

[q] Zech. 1. 14; 8. 2.—[r] Deut. 32. 36; Isa. 60. 10.—[s] See chap. 1. 10; Mal. 3. 10, 11, 12.

tion was heeded; the solemn assembly was held, the people turned to Jehovah in penitence, and as a result Jehovah altered his purpose. Now he promises to remove the locusts and to restore prosperity, such as has not been known before, until all will know that Jehovah himself dwells in the midst of the people (ii, 18–27). The manifestation of his mercy will not stop there; to the temporal blessings he will add rich spiritual gifts (28, 29). When the day of judgment finally comes, introduced by extraordinary phenomena (30, 31), it will not strike the chosen people; they will be spared (32), and those who are still in exile will be brought back to Zion (iii, 1); but the enemies of the Jews will be annihilated in a terrible conflict in the valley of Jehoshaphat (2–16). Zion will continue in the enjoyment of highest felicity under the direct protection of Jehovah, while her enemies will be turned into desolation and ruin (17–21).

The promises, then, refer, on the one hand, to the immediate future (18–27); on the other, to times more remote (28ff.).

Blessings to be enjoyed in the immediate future, 18–27.

Verse 18 marks the transition to the promises. The future tenses of A. V. have been rightly changed into past tenses in R. V. **Then**—The time is not definitely stated but is implied, when the people turned to Jehovah in penitence of heart. **Jealous . . . pity**—Jealousy is frequently ascribed to God in the Old Testament. The expression is probably adopted from the marriage relation, which is often used to describe the relation of Jehovah to the people of Israel (Isa. liv, 5; lxii, 5; Hos. ii, 19). Though at present the word is used commonly in a bad sense, it was not always so. The jealousy of Jehovah is aroused when his power is doubted, or when he is robbed of his proper dues, or when proper treatment is refused to one who is the object of his peculiar care and love. In the last case Jehovah interferes not merely to secure what belongs to him, but he interposes in behalf of his loved one. The calamity that had befallen the people had caused the surrounding nations to ask mockingly, "Where is their God?" Now Jehovah must vindicate himself; but he was moved also by pity for his people. "Love, having been made jealous by misrepresentation or ill treatment on the part of a third person, undergoes a strong reaction against the latter in favor of the former" (Exod. xx, 5; Zech. i, 14; viii, 2; Ezek. xxxvi, 5, 6).

19. The jealousy and pity bring about a change in the purpose of God, which change is indicated in the reply to the petitions. The things needed immediately will be restored at once. **I will send**—Heb. *hinnēh* with the participle, "I am about to send" (G.-K., 116p.). **Corn** ["grain"] . . . ["new"] **wine . . . oil**—The very things that the locusts had destroyed (i, 10); they were needed for the daily sacrifice (i, 9), and for daily life (i, 11, 12). These products will be given not in a scant measure but in abundance, so that the people will be satisfied. The new prosperity will remove the reproach (ii, 17) that Israel is a poor people whose God is unable or unwilling to assist it; the surrounding nations will recognize once more the presence of Jehovah. The very fact that the removal of the reproach is connected with the new fertility makes it probable that the danger of becoming a reproach was due to the absence of fertility, not to the invasion of a foreign foe.

[t]I will remove far off from you [u]the northern *army*, and will drive him into a land barren and desolate, with his face [x]toward the east sea, and his hinder part [y]toward the utmost sea, and his stink shall come

[t] See Exod. 10. 19.—[u] Jer. 1.14.—[x] Ezek. 47. 18; Zech. 14. 8.—[y] Deut. 11. 24.

The contents of the promise do not seem to be enumerated in the chronological order in which they will actually be realized. The blessings of verse 19 follow, they do not precede, the destruction of the locusts announced in verse 20. **From you**—Literally, *from upon you*. Two prepositions in Hebrew; the locusts had been resting upon the land as a burden (Amos v, 23; Exod. x, 17). **The northern army**—Literally, *the northern one* (see above, p. 144). The context requires that we regard the expression as an epithet of the swarm of locusts. True, ordinarily they do not come from the north, but it cannot be proved that they never come from there. All that Jerome was willing to say is that "the swarms of locusts are more generally brought by the south wind than by the north." Niebuhr tells of a tract of land, on the road from Nisibis to Mosul, completely covered with young locusts. Locusts are also found in the Syrian and Palmyrene desert, whence they might easily be carried by a northeast wind into Palestine toward Jerusalem; in such case the designation "the northern" would be perfectly appropriate. While this is a legitimate interpretation, it is more likely (see above, p. 145) that the term is used here not in a literal but in an apocalyptic sense, derived from passages such as Jer. i, 14; Ezek. xxxviii, 6, 15. A similar change from an historical to an apocalyptic conception may be seen in the corresponding Arabic word (Wellhausen). The army which came from the north will be carried away by a north wind **into a land barren and desolate**—Not only the desert shores of the Dead Sea (Credner), but the great Arabian Desert south and southeast of Palestine. There the main body will go. The following clause would better be rendered, with R. V., "its forepart into the eastern sea, and its hinder part into the western sea." **Face**—R. V., "forepart"; that which is in front, the van. **East sea**—Literally, *front sea*. The Hebrews and other Oriental nations, in fixing the points of the compass, faced eastward; hence *front—east, behind—west*. The "East Sea" is the Dead Sea, which is eastward from Jerusalem (Zech. xiv, 8; Ezek. xlvii, 18). **Hinder part**—Literally, *end*, the rear; Heb. *sōph*, an Aramaic word (Dan. iv, 8, 29) found only in late Hebrew writings. **Utmost sea**—Literally, *hinder sea;* R. V., "western sea," the Mediterranean (Deut. xi, 24; Num. xxxiv, 6, 7; Zech. xiv, 8). The expressions are not to be understood as signifying that three winds would blow at one and the same time, one from the north, one from the east or northeast, the third from the west or northwest; they present a rhetorical picture of rapid and total destruction "which is founded upon the idea that the wind rises in the northwest, then turns to the north, and finally to the northeast, so that the van of the swarm is driven into the Dead Sea, the great mass into the southern desert, and the rear into the Mediterranean." The dead locusts will soon decay, their stench will rise (Isa. xxxiv, 3; Amos iv, 10). **Ill savor**—The Hebrew word is found only here, but its meaning is determined by the cognate languages and is correctly reproduced by the ancient versions. The Hebrew construction is peculiar. Hence, many commentators think that the two clauses, "and his stink shall come up, and his ill savor shall come up," are an expansion of one clause. "And his ill savor shall come up" they regard as the original of the two, while they consider the other, "and his stink shall come up," a later gloss intended

up, and his ill savor shall come up, because [s]he hath done great things.

21 Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice: for the LORD will do great

[s] Heb. *he hath magnified to do.*——[z] Chap. 1. 18, 20.——[a] Zech. 8. 12. See chap. 1. 19.

things. 22 Be not afraid, [z]ye beasts of the field: for [a]the pastures of the wilderness do spring, for the tree beareth her fruit, the fig tree and the vine do yield their strength.

to explain the rare word translated "ill savor." "Even in our own times," says Jerome, "we have seen the land of Judah covered by swarms of locusts, which as soon as the wind arose were precipitated into the first and the hindermost (Dead and Mediterranean) seas. And when the shores of both seas were filled with heaps of dead locusts, which the waters had thrown up, their corruption and stench became so noxious that even the atmosphere was corrupted, and both man and beast suffered from consequent pestilence." **Because he hath done great things**—Literally, *he hath shown greatness to do.* Affirmed of Jehovah in verse 21. When used of men or other creatures the idea of haughtiness is implied; they have gone beyond their proper bounds (Lam. i, 9; Psa. xxxv, 26); like the German "grossthun," *to brag, to glory in one's strength and success.* Here, not only "it has accomplished a great devastation," but, "it has accomplished it and brags about it." In a strictly literal sense the expression is inapplicable to irrational creatures, but this does by no means prove that the locusts symbolize hostile armies. The prophet is at liberty, in a poetic description, to endow even irrational creatures with rational and moral powers (Isa. xliv, 23). It is interesting to note that Hebrew legislation holds even animals accountable for acts of violence (Gen. ix, 5; Exod. xxi, 28–32).

Verses 19, 20 are placed in the mouth of Jehovah; in 21 the prophet steps in once more as the speaker. In the presence of calamity joy had vanished from the sons of men (i, 12); the promises of 19, 20 mean a complete transformation. In view of the new prospects he calls upon the land (21), the beasts (22), and the children of Zion (23) to be glad and rejoice. 21. **Land**—In i, 10, it is represented as mourning; now the danger is past, therefore, it is time for rejoicing. The land rejoices when it greens and brings forth abundant harvest. **Jehovah will do great things**—R. V., "hath done." The same phrase as that applied to the locusts in verse 20 (Psa. cxxvi, 2, 3). The great thing is the change of purpose and the destruction of the foe that "had done great things." The tense is the so-called *prophetic perfect;* the deliverance is not yet accomplished, but to the prophet it is as good as accomplished, since Jehovah has decided upon it. 22. **Beasts**—They had groaned on account of the destruction of all vegetation (i, 18, 20); all is changed now, food will no longer be wanting. **Pastures**—Devoured by the fire (i, 19). **Do spring**—They bring forth new grass (Gen. i, 11, 12; Psa. xxiii, 2). The tenses as in verse 21. The beasts are called upon to rejoice because the trees bear fruit once more. **The tree beareth her fruit**—The fruit bearing of the trees, especially of the vine and fig, has no direct bearing on the happiness of the beasts; but they are to enter into sympathy with the inhabitants and rejoice with them over the new fertility. There is, however, another reason for their rejoicing. In i, 20, the water brooks are described as dried up, producing great suffering among the beasts. Without water there can be no vegetation. On the other hand, vegetation presupposes plenty of water, and new growth of the trees implies abundance of water to relieve the thirst of the beasts; therefore they may well rejoice. **Yield their strength**—They produce fruit, not sparingly as in the

23 Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and [b]rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you [7]the former rain [8]moderately, and he [c]will cause to come down for you [d]the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in

[b] Isa. 41.16; 61. 10; Hab. 3. 18; Zech. 10. 7.—[7] Or, *a teacher of righteousness.*—[8] Heb. *according to righteousness.*—[c] Lev. 26. 4; Deut. 11. 14; 28. 12.—[d] James 5. 7.

past, but in accord with their full powers. 23. **Children of Zion**—In the narrower sense this expression includes only the inhabitants of Jerusalem; here probably all who suffered from the locusts, the inhabitants of Judah. Especially in a religious community the capital might stand for the whole land, for in it the whole life was centered. **In Jehovah**—In their rejoicing they are to remember that it is the mercy of Jehovah that has caused the transformation. **The former rain moderately**—R. V., "the former rain in just measure"; margin, "a teacher of righteousness"; or, rendering the first word "former rain," it translates the second "according to righteousness"; margin R. V., "in (or, *for*) righteousness." It has been well said that "from time immemorial there has been a diversity of opinion as to the meaning of these words." *The teacher unto righteousness* is a perfectly correct translation; it is the translation and interpretation of ancient Jewish commentators, and is adopted by a few moderns (Merx, Von Orelli, Keil, and others). The expression is explained by passages such as 1 Kings viii, 36; 2 Chron. vi, 27, according to which "the answer to prayer for rain must be preceded by divine instruction respecting the good way" (Von Orelli). There is a difference of opinion, however, as to who is this teacher. Some suppose him to be the Messiah, some a future teacher, some the ideal teacher or the collective body of messengers from God, others the prophet Joel himself, and still others the entire procession of teachers culminating in the Messiah. While the possibility of this translation is readily admitted, the rendering embodied in the text is preferable, because (1) the "teacher unto righteousness" would be a spiritual gift, but we do not expect a reference to a spiritual gift here. The blessings announced in this section are purely physical—the destruction of the locusts and the restoration of fertility. The announcement of the higher spiritual gifts marks a distinct advance, and these are not expected by the prophet until a more distant future. (2) The word *môreh* is used again in the last clause of the verse, where it refers undoubtedly to "early rain." It is at least doubtful that the prophet, anxious to be understood, would use, without explanation, the two words in so close connection with different meanings. On the whole, the rendering "former rain" is more satisfactory. **Moderately**—Or, *in just measure.* It is exceedingly doubtful that the word *ṣedhāḳāh* is ever used in the physical sense of correctness or correct measure, as is implied in the above rendering. It seems to be used exclusively in an ethical sense; therefore here better, "according to righteousness" (Hos. x, 12), that is, as Jehovah's righteousness prompts him (Isa. xlii, 6; xlv, 13); which means, in abundant measure. This is more satisfactory than the translation of Ewald and others, "rain for justification"—the rain which is a sign that they are adopted again into the righteous consideration of God. **Rain**—Heb. *geshem.* General term for abundant rain, but especially the heavy rains beginning, as a rule, toward the close of October and continuing until February. **Former rain**—The rains at the opening of the rainy season, September–October. **Latter rain**—The showers of March and April. Since they come just before the dry season sets in, they are of the greatest importance in Palestine. **In the first month**—The first month would be *Nisan,* March–April, which is the

the first *month*. 24 And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the fats shall overflow with wine and oil. 25 And I will restore to you the years [e]that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpiller, and the palmerworm, [f]my great army which I sent among you. 26 And ye shall [g]eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you: and my people shall never be ashamed. 27 [h]And ye shall know that I *am* [i]in the midst of Israel, and *that* [k]I *am* the LORD your God, and none else:

[e] Chap. 1. 4.—[f] Verse 11.—[g] Lev. 26. 5; Psa. 22. 26; see Lev. 26. 26; Mic. 6. 14.

[h] Chap. 3. 17.—[i] Lev. 26. 11, 12; Ezek. 37. 26, 27, 28.—[k] Isa. 45. 5, 21, 22; Ezek. 39. 22, 28.

time for the latter rain, but it could not be connected with the former rain as it seems to be connected in the text. If the Hebrew text is correct it is better translated, with the margin, "at the first," in contrast with "afterward" (verse 28) when the spiritual gifts are bestowed. Some of the ancient versions, followed by some modern scholars, read "as before," that is, before the calamity. This gives excellent sense, and requires but a slight emendation of the text. Wellhausen suggests to omit the second "former rain," since it appears to be a useless repetition. If this suggestion is accepted we have in this text the three principal rains of the season in their regular order; all three are essential for fertility, therefore Jehovah will restore them.

24–27. The heavens are open once more, the drought will come to an end, the locusts will disappear, the harvest and vintage will be plentiful, so that the presence of Jehovah will indeed be realized. 24. A repetition by the prophet of the thought expressed by Jehovah in verse 19. The conditions described in i, 10–12, are to be reversed; corn, wine, and oil will be plentiful. **Floors**—Threshing floors, where corn is threshed out and heaped up (Thomson, ii, 314–316). **Fats**—Modern form, *vats*. Not the wine presses, but the receptacles into which the wine flows from the presses, usually excavated in the natural rock (Isa. v, 2), a little lower than the presses (Van Lennep, 117ff.); applied here also to the receptacles for the oil. The vintage will be so plentiful that the vats will overflow (Prov. iii, 10).

25. By means of the bountiful harvest promised in verse 24 Jehovah will restore to the people the loss they have suffered through the locusts. **Years**—The calamity was not limited to one year, and it is not easy to see how the effects of a calamity like that described in chapter i could have been confined to one year. **Locusts**—For the names see comment on i, 4; here they occur in different order, an indication that the names cannot refer to locusts in successive stages of development. **My great army**—The locusts are identified with the "army" of verse 11 (compare verse 2); that takes us back also to i, 4, proving that the prophet is concerned throughout with locusts as such, and not as symbols of hostile armies.

26. As a result of the bountiful restoration, the Jews will recognize Jehovah as their God and praise him for his divine interposition. **Name of Jehovah**—Equivalent to *person of Jehovah* (see on Amos ii, 7; Mic. v, 4; Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible*, article "Name," 5). **Shall never be ashamed**—Having been brought to a true recognition of God, they may now enjoy his favor; he need not turn away from them again, or send calamities that would disgrace them in the eyes of their neighbors (ii, 17; compare Isa. xlix, 23; Psa. xxii, 5). 27. The calamity was an evidence of the displeasure of Jehovah (Hos. ii, 6, 7, 9; v, 15; Ezek. x, 18, 19; xi, 23), in the same manner prosperity will be a proof of his favor and presence. **In the midst of Israel**—As the source of blessing, as protector and refuge in all need (Isa. xii, 6; Hos. xi, 9;

and my people shall never be ashamed.

28 [l]And it shall come to pass afterward, *that* I [m]will pour out my spirit

[l] Isa. 44. 3; Ezek. 39. 29; Acts 2. 17.—[m] Zech. 12. 10; John 7. 39.

Deut. vii, 21). **Israel**—Evidently the theocratic community made up of the reunited Israel and Judah (Isa. xi, 12, 13). This verse is a reply to the taunt in verse 17, "Where is their God?" **I am Jehovah your God**—Every religious leader from the time of Moses insisted that Jehovah was the God of Israel (Exod. xx, 2; Deut. v, 6), but the people too frequently forgot it and went "whoring after other gods" (Hos. ii, 5, 8). To bring them to their senses Jehovah must pour out judgment again and again; but the present blow will cure them, and they will recognize in him, and in him only, their God. The phrase is a very common one in the Old Testament, used always, in connections similar to this one, "to denote the conviction produced by some great act of judgment or deliverance upon those who witness it." **None else**—"By their fruits ye shall know them." The gods who in the past lured away the people are seen to be worthless; they have no power to protect or help (Hos. ii, 7; Isa. i, 29–31; Isa. xlv, 5, 6, 18; Deut. iv, 35). The closing words are a repetition, from the preceding verse, rounding off in a rhetorical manner the promises of the immediate temporal blessings and of permanent protection.

Spiritual gifts to be bestowed in a more distant future, ii, 28–32 (Hebrew chap. iii).

This section takes us to a more distant future; how far is not stated. In addition to the temporal blessings promised for the immediate future (verses 19–27), higher spiritual blessings are awaiting the people. The Spirit will be poured out upon them, so that the spiritual perception of all will be clarified and intensified (28, 29); and being in a new fellowship with Jehovah they have nothing more to fear. The day of Jehovah will come, inaugurated by extraordinary phenomena in nature (30, 31), but those who through the outpouring of the Spirit have become true children of God shall escape (32).

28. **Afterward**—After the realization of the temporal prosperity. Not the expression used by other prophets (Isa. ii, 2; Mic. iv, 1). Joel seems to point to a date nearer than that suggested by the other expression, but he also leaves the exact time indefinite. **I will pour out**—"*Shāphakh* does not mean merely to give in drops, but to pour out in great abundance" (Calvin). **My spirit**—The spirit is the life principle in man, the invisible power to which all external actions must be traced. In a similar way all the visible manifestations of Jehovah, whatever the sphere, are caused by the Spirit of Jehovah: creation (Gen. i, 2; Job xxxiii, 4); the endowment of Israel's heroes with warlike energy and administrative power (Judg. iii, 10; xi, 29; compare *Journal of Biblical Literature*, xix, i, 140ff., and xxiii, i, 13ff.). It is, however, especially in the sphere of the ethical, the religious, and the spiritual that the Spirit is active. The Spirit produces the prophetic power in its lower and higher forms (1 Sam. x, 6, 10; xix, 20; Isa. lxi, 1, etc.); it inspires the high ethical and spiritual ideas and ideals of the prophets. Thus far the Spirit had been the possession of only a select few; in the afterward the limitation will be done away with. Moses had expressed the wish (Num. xi, 29), "Would that all Jehovah's people were prophets, that Jehovah would put his Spirit upon them!" Of the realization of this wish in the future Joel is now convinced. **Upon all flesh**—A phrase used by the Hebrews sometimes in a wider sense, including all living creatures, both man and

upon all flesh; [n]and your sons and [o]your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:

[n] Isa. 54. 13.—[o] Acts 21. 9.—[p] 1 Cor. 12. 13; Gal. 3. 28; Col. 3. 11.

beast (Gen. vi, 13; vii, 15; ix, 11, 15); at other times in a narrower sense, of mankind alone (Jer. xxv, 31; Psa. lxv, 2); here only mankind, since animals nowhere appear as recipients of the Divine Spirit and the following clause seems to exclude them. It is a further question, however, whether all mankind is included or whether the promise is to be limited to Israel. Keil argues for the former, yet it is more probable, judging from the context, that the prophet has in mind Israel only. The specifications of 28, 29 point in that direction, and the expectation of the destruction of all nations (chapter iii) decides the point in favor of Israel alone (compare Acts x, 45). But while the outpouring is to be confined to Israel, within the nation no one is to be excluded; all are to become active organs of the divine revelation. **Shall prophesy . . . shall dream dreams . . . shall see visions**—No distinction will be made of sex, age, or position, but the prophet distinguishes between different methods in which the revelation is to be received and the prophetic gift to be exercised. He does not mean, however, that each of the methods is peculiar to the age with which it is connected. That the Spirit manifests itself to the weakened mind of the old man in dreams of the night, to the lively fancy of the youth and maiden in sights during the day—that is, true visions—and to the soul of the child, less able to resist, merely as a divine influence—cannot be proved from the Bible. Visions and dreams are two forms in which prophetic revelation is imparted (Num. xii, 6). All that the prophet means with the specification is that "their sons, daughters, old persons, and youth would receive the

29 And also upon [p]the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. **30** And [q]I will shew wonders in the heavens

[q] Matt. 24. 29; Mark 13. 24; Luke 21. 11,25.

Spirit of Jehovah with all its various gifts." **Prophesy**—They will be able to do the work which in the past was limited to the prophets; they are to become "organs of divine revelations," to make known to those outside of Israel the will of God. (For an excellent discussion of the inspiration and activity of the Hebrew prophets see Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible*, article "Prophecy and Prophets.") 29. **And also**—Better, *and even*. Introduces something very extraordinary. The position of slaves was very humble; ordinarily they would not be thought of in connection with these great spiritual gifts; but in the Messianic age, there will be no distinction between "bond and free," so far as spiritual possessions are concerned; all alike will share in the outpouring of the Spirit. LXX. reads, "*my* servants and *my* handmaidens," that is, of God and not of men; the change may be due to failure to understand the extension of the divine promises so as to include even slaves. Whether there is any thought of the non-Israelitish slaves, who as a result of their connection with families of the chosen race are to become partakers of the Spirit, is not clear. For the fulfillment see above, p. 149.

In this new relation the people of Jehovah are forever safe; they will be protected when the day of Jehovah, temporarily postponed, comes; its terrors will fall only upon those who are outside of the covenant relation. This day the prophet appears to expect soon after the outpouring of the Spirit. 30, 31. Wonderful indications of the approach of the judgment. **Show**—Literally, *give*. **Wonders**—Heb. *môphethîm*. "Any object of significance which surpasses expectation or the ordinary course of nature, and

and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. 31 [r]The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, [s]before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come. 32 And it shall come to pass, *that* [t]whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for [u]in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in [x]the remnant whom the LORD shall call.

[r] Verse 10; Isa. 13. 9, 10; chap. 3. 1, 15; Matt. 24. 29; Mark 13. 24; Luke 21. 25; Rev. 6. 12.——[s] Mal. 4. 5.——[t] Rom. 10. 13.——[u] Isa. 46. 13; 59. 20; Obad. 17; Rom. 11. 26.——[x] Isa. 11. 11, 16; Jer. 31. 7; Mic. 4. 7; 5. 3, 7, 8; Rom. 9. 27; 11. 5, 7.

excites wonder in consequence"; here extraordinary phenomena on earth and in the sky. **Blood . . . fire . . . pillars of smoke**—If the phenomena mentioned in this verse are such as take place upon earth, these words point to the terrors of war, bloodshed, violence, and the columns of smoke rising from burned cities. Wars will be on an unprecedented scale, and thus may well be regarded as portents of the day of Jehovah (Isa. xiii, 6; Zeph. i, 7). Some commentators, however, prefer to connect this verse more closely with verse 31, and to interpret the phenomena mentioned in 30 in the light of those in 31. They see in the fire, blood, and pillars of smoke "abnormal atmospherical phenomena": *blood*—the blood-red color of the moon; *smoke*—the smoke clouds filling the air as a result of volcanic eruptions; *fire*—lightning, since "thunderstorms often accompany earthquakes." The former interpretation is to be preferred. In 31 the phenomena in the sky are mentioned. "The darkening and extinction of the lights of heaven are frequently mentioned as harbingers of approaching judgment, or as signs of the breaking of the day of judgment" (ii, 2, 10; iii, 15; Isa. xiii, 10; xxxiv, 4; Jer. iv, 23, etc.; compare, in the New Testament, Matt. xxiv, 29; Mark xiii, 24; Luke xxi, 25; Rev. vi, 12). **Sun . . . darkness, . . . moon . . . blood**—The figures may have been suggested by eclipses of the sun and moon (Amos viii, 9), or by strange obscurations caused by other disturbances (ii, 2, 10), or as described in the following account: "A dreadful whirlwind occurred here (in Allahabad) on June 2, 1838. The whole sky was blood-red, not with clouds, for there was not a cloud to be seen. Overhead moved immense masses of dust, but below there was not a breath of wind. Shortly after the wind arose, carrying with it sand and dust. It soon became extremely dark, although the sun was still up. The darkness was not only visible but tangible" (Driver, quoted from *Asiatic Journal*, Nov., 1838). These phenomena, according to the declaration of the prophet, will announce the approach of the great day, just as previously the locust plague pointed to its coming.

32. Though a day great and terrible, it will be such only to the nations (iii, 2); the true worshipers of Jehovah need have no fear. **Whosoever**—A very comprehensive word, but it is clear from the context, "for in Mount Zion and Jerusalem there shall be those that escape" (R. V.) that the prophet is concerned primarily with the Jews. **Call on the name of Jehovah**—Not merely with a cold ceremonial or heartless repetition of phrases, but with spiritual, heartfelt worship. *To call* is equivalent to *to worship*. The condition of escape is not membership in the Israel according to the flesh; even those within Israel need something more to assure their salvation on that day—namely, a true, whole-hearted devotion to God. **For in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance**—Better, with R. V., "those that escape." This limits salvation to the Jews, and, among the Jews, to only a part. **As Jehovah hath said**—This sounds as if Joel were referring to an earlier prophecy. The promise actually occurs in Obad. 17; it is quite possible, therefore, that Joel is dependent on

CHAPTER III.

FOR, behold, [a]in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, 2 [b]I will also gather all nations, and will bring them

[a] Jer. 30. 3; Ezek. 38. 14.

[b] Zech. 14.2, 3, 4.

the latter. **The remnant**—Those that escape the judgment of the great day. The thought of the prophet seems to be that not only the Jews who are in Jerusalem on that day will escape, but that some true worshipers are found also among the Jews who are scattered among the nations. These Jehovah will call to his salvation. That the prophet has in mind believers among the heathen is made improbable by the threat of the utter destruction of the nations in chapter iii.

The apostle Peter quoted verses 28–32a, after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, as having been fulfilled by that event. However, the fulfillment cannot be limited to that one event; the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost was simply the beginning of the fulfillment which is being continued even now, and will continue until all flesh shall be blessed with divine illumination. Therefore the promise should be regarded "not as a prediction of the event of Pentecost, but of the new order of things of which the day of Pentecost was the first great example" (A. B. Davidson, *Expositor*, 1888, p. 208).

CHAPTER III.

Judgment Upon the Nations; Glorification of Zion, chap. iii.

When the great day, announced by extraordinary phenomena (ii, 30, 31), really breaks, its terrors will fall only upon the nations hostile to the chosen people. The purpose of this final judgment is twofold: on the one hand, to bring about a complete and final separation between the faithful and their enemies; on the other hand, to establish the kingdom of Jehovah upon earth in triumphal glory.

The conflict is to take place in the valley of Jehoshaphat (1–3); the nations that have manifested the greatest hostility will suffer the most (4–8); in spite of their great numbers and active preparation, they will be utterly annihilated, while the people of Jehovah will suffer no harm (9–16); the enemies of Zion will no more pass through her; in quietness and peace the city will abide forever, with Jehovah as her king (17–21).

1. **For**—Connects iii, 1, with ii, 32. The prophet explains why he mentions the deliverance of only a remnant of the Jews—the other nations will be utterly destroyed. At the same time he indicates by what means the salvation of the dispersed is to be wrought; the judgment upon the nations will help to free the Israelites from bondage. **Behold**—The truth to be announced is of the greatest importance, and is worthy of the closest attention (Isa. iii, 1; vii, 14; Amos vi, 11). **In those days, . . . in that time**—Refers back, not to ii, 28, but to ii, 32, the time of the deliverance of the Jews (Jer. xxxiii, 15); the exact time is determined by what follows. **When I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem**—The judgment upon the nations (verse 2), the restoration of the captives (verse 1), the salvation of the remnant (ii, 32), all fall into the same period. Whether this is the right translation, or the one mentioned on page 133, "I shall restore the fortune," there can be no doubt that the prophet intends to promise a radical change in the condition of the people; and, according to the context, an essential element in the restoration of the fortune is the deliverance of the Israelites from the power of the surrounding nations into whose hands they fell after the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B. C.

2. At the time of the restoration Jehovah will **gather all nations**—All

down into [c]the valley of Jehoshaphat, and [d]will plead with them there for my people and *for* my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land. 3 And they have [e]cast lots for my people; and have given a boy for an harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they might drink. 4 Yea, and what have ye to do with

[c] Verse 12; 2 Chron. 20. 26.—[d] Isa. 66. 16; Ezek. 38. 22.—[e] Obad. 11; Nah. 3. 10.

that are guilty of hostility toward the people of God; and that included all the nations known to the prophet, for all had sinned at some time against the covenant people. **Valley of Jehoshaphat**—This name is given to the scene of the final conflict because of the meaning of the name: *Jehovah judges.* It is thought by some that the place is to be identified with the valley in which several nations were conquered by Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. xx, 26ff.), and which received the name, *valley of blessing.* That valley, however, was farther from Jerusalem than the scene of this conflict. Tradition, from the time of Eusebius on, has identified the valley of Jehoshaphat with the depression between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives, otherwise called valley of the Kidron. This may be a correct identification; but it is by no means certain that the prophet had in mind any particular spot; the meaning of the name would account satisfactorily for the use of the same. Hostility against the people was hostility against the God of the people; he now interferes on their behalf. **Plead**—Or, *enter into judgment;* R. V, "execute judgment." **Heritage**—They belong to Jehovah, and they are as dear and precious to him as an heirloom; therefore he will not "on any terms part with them or suffer them to be lost."

Now follow the specific charges against the nations; they are twofold: (1) they have deported the Jews, and (2) they have parted—divided among themselves—the land of Jehovah. **Scattered among the nations, . . . parted my land**—These words cannot refer to the invasion of Judah by the Philistines and Arabians in the time of Jehoram (2 Chron. xxi, 16, 17), for their deeds of violence would not warrant the use of these expressions; they can refer only to a dispersion of great numbers of Jews and the occupying of their territory by foreign invaders. But the statement of Keil, that this takes us to the dispersion of the Jews after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A. D., and that therefore we have the prediction of an event in the distant future, finds no support in the context. The words are explained best as presupposing the exiles of 597 and 586 B. C. (Ezek. xi, 17; xii, 15). The attempt of Koenig to identify Israel with the northern kingdom only cannot be considered successful, since the terms Israel and Judah are used interchangeably in the Book of Joel. For the expression "parted my land" compare Mic. ii, 4; Amos vii, 17.

Verse 3 depicts the ignominious treatment which the captive Jews received from their conquerors. **Cast lots**—The distribution of captives among their captors by lot seems to have been a common custom with ancient peoples (Obad. 11; Nah. iii, 10; Thucid., iii, 50). This made the captives the absolute property of their masters, who could do with them as they pleased, even might dispose of them if they could do so to greater advantage. **Boy**—Since he would be of little immediate use, they exchanged him for a **harlot**—To satisfy their lusts. **A girl**—Too young to serve their purposes, or after having satisfied their lusts, they give away for **wine**—To indulge in licentious revelry.

4–8. The prophet turns aside for a moment to address the nations who had been especially hostile to the Jews; he points out their special wrongdoings and promises to them swift and righteous retribution for

me, [f]O Tyre, and Zidon, and all the coasts of Palestine? [g]will ye render me a recompense? and if ye recompense me, swiftly *and* speedily will I return your recompense upon your own head; 5 Because ye have taken

[f] Amos 1. 6, 9.—[g] Ezek. 25. 15, 16, 17.

their crimes. **Tyre, Zidon** ["Sidon"]—The two chief cities of Phœnicia; both are extremely old, Sidon being commonly, though perhaps wrongly, considered the older (Gen. x, 15). Tyre was situated originally on the mainland, but to protect it against invaders it was transferred to a neighboring rocky island. Tyre was nearer to Israel than Sidon; this fact and the ever-increasing power of the city account for the priority of Tyre in the great majority of Old Testament passages in which the two are named together. Here the two cities stand for all Phœnicia. **Coasts of Palestine**—Better, R. V., "regions of Philistia." The territory in southwest Canaan, about fifty miles long and fifteen miles wide, divided among five chief cities; independent in time of peace, ordinarily united in time of war. "Regions," literally, *circles*, probably refers to this division. The Philistines were exceedingly hostile to the Jews throughout their entire history, from the time of the Exodus on. **What have ye to do with me?**—R. V., "what are ye to me?" This question, which is addressed to the nations, is left uncompleted, but it is taken up again and explained in the following question. The translation in the margin of R. V. brings out the thought best: "will ye repay a deed of mine, or will ye do aught unto me? swiftly and speedily will I return your deed upon your own head." Explain your hostile attitude toward my people. Have I done any wrong to you which you would avenge by assailing my people, or is this attack upon them without any provocation? A rhetorical question, to which but one answer can be given: There is nothing to

my silver and my gold, and have carried into your temples my goodly [1]pleasant things: 6 The children also of Judah and the children of Jerusalem have ye sold unto [2]the Grecians, that ye might remove

[1] Heb. *desirable*; Dan. 11. 38.—[2] Heb. *the sons of the Grecians.*

avenge, no occasion for an attack upon my people. But, if you think that you have an occasion that demands retaliation, let me warn you that I will, and that speedily, bring back your doings upon your own head (Obad. 15; Lam. iii, 64; Psa. vii, 16).

Verses 5, 6 explain what these nations have done to Jehovah: they have stolen his silver and gold and filled their temples with his precious things, and his children they have sold as slaves. **My silver . . . my gold, . . . my goodly pleasant things**—Not exclusively the things stolen from the temple, but also those taken from the palaces and homes of the rich. These things belong to Jehovah, because they are the possessions of his people. In ancient times plundering always followed the conquest of a city (1 Kings xiv, 26; 2 Kings xiv, 14). The temple was rich in golden vessels, the palaces full of jewels and valuables of every kind; these the enemies put into their own **temples**—The Hebrew word means palace as well as temple (Isa. xiii, 22; Amos viii, 3; Prov. xxx, 28). Those who insist on an early date for Joel regard this a reference to the invasion of the Philistines and Arabs (2 Chron. xxi, 16ff.); but there the Phœnicians are not mentioned. Neither do we know of a postexilic event to which this accusation could apply. It is impossible, therefore, to say with certainty what invasion is in the prophet's mind. The historical books of the Old Testament do not give a record of all the events in the history of Israel; especially concerning postexilic times is our knowledge very limited. Not only Jehovah's possessions but also his people have they maltreated. **Sold**—As slaves. **The Grecians**—Not the inhabitants of

them far from their border. 7 Behold, [h]I will raise them out of the place whither ye have sold them, and will return your recompense upon your own head: 8 And I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the children of Judah, and they shall sell them to the [i]Sabeans, to a people [k]far off: for the LORD hath spoken *it*.

9 [1]Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; [3]Prepare war, wake up the

[h] Isa. 43. 5, 6; 49. 12; Jer. 23. 8.—[i] Ezek. 23. 42.—[k] Jer. 6. 20.

[1] See Isa. 8. 9, 10; Jer. 46. 3, 4; Ezek. 38. 7.—[3] Heb. *Sanctify.*

a city in *Arabia Felix* (Credner), nor *Yawan* in *Yemen* (Hitzig), but the Grecians; literally, *Ionians* (Gen. x, 2; Isa. lxvi, 19; Ezek. xxvii, 13, 19, etc.). The slave traffic of the Phœnicians is frequently mentioned in the Old Testament and in postbiblical writings (Amos i, 9; Ezek. xxvii, 13; 1 Macc. iii, 41). That the Phœnicians and the Greeks had commercial intercourse at a very early period is attested by Greek writers; that slave trade may have been carried on at that early period cannot be denied; that an extensive slave trade between these nations was carried on in postexilic times is certain. In the fifth century B. C., and later, Syrian slaves —and that would include Jewish— were sought after in Greece. **Far from their border**—So that there would be no possibility of returning. Such separation from home would be a severe blow to the Jews who thought of a foreign country and a foreign nation as unclean. The prophet may have in mind the distant western colonies of the Ionians.

7, 8. Indeed, these enemies deserve punishment; and "with what measure ye mete it shall be measured unto you." All they have done will be recompensed to them according to the *lex talionis*. **Behold, I will raise them** ["stir them up"]—Better, *I am about to stir up*. The event is imminent (compare ii, 19). **Them**—The children of Judah and Jerusalem; they will be roused into activity in their place of exile, and will be brought home (verse 1); there under the blessing of Jehovah the Jews will become strong and powerful, and by means of them Jehovah will do unto the Tyrians, Sidonians, and Philistines as they have done unto Judah and Jerusalem—sell them into slavery. **Sons and daughters**—Not children, but citizens of the countries (Hos. ii, 2). **Sabeans** ["men of Sheba"] —A celebrated commercial nation in southwest Arabia; well known from the descriptions of ancient geographers, and more recently from the inscriptions found in the district itself. They traded not only in the products of their own land, but also in those of India and Ethiopia (Gen. x, 7, 28; xxv, 3; 1 Kings x, 2, 10). **A people** ["nation"] **far off**—The Jews had been sold into the far west (verse 6); their enemies are to be sold to the far southeast. LXX. reads, "into exile"; which presupposes only a slight change in the Hebrew text and is favored by some as the original reading. The prophet assures the nations that the prediction will surely be fulfilled. **For Jehovah hath spoken it**—A common formula of asseveration in the Old Testament (Isa. i, 20; xxii, 25; Obad. 18).

9–16. After this condemnation of the bitterest enemies of the chosen people the prophet returns to the announcement broken off in verse 3. The nations are urged to equip themselves for the conflict, to gather in the valley of Jehoshaphat; but when they gather at the command of Jehovah they are annihilated, while his own people remain secure. **9. Proclaim ye**—Not the pious Jews (Wuensche), but those whose duty it is to make such proclamation, the heralds, who are at the command of Jehovah (Amos iii, 9, 13). **This**—The message which follows. **Gentiles**—Better, R. V., "nations." **Prepare war**—Literally, *sanctify*. Bring the sacrifices, perform the religious rites customary before the opening of a war; by these

mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: **10** [m]Beat your plowshares into swords, and your [4]pruninghooks into spears: [n]let the weak say, I *am* strong. **11** [o]Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither [5]cause [p]thy mighty ones to come down, O LORD. **12** Let the heathen be wakened, [q]and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to [r]judge all the heathen round about. **13** [s]Put ye in the sickle, for [t]the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the [u]press is full, the fats over-

[m] See Isa. 2. 4; Mic. 4. 3.——[4] Or, *scythes*.——[n] Zech. 12. 8.——[o] Verse 2.——[5] Or, *the LORD shall bring down*.——[p] Psa. 103. 20; Isa. 13. 3.——[q] Verse 2.

[r] Psa. 96. 13; 98. 9; 110. 6; Isa. 2. 4; 3. 13; Mic. 4. 3.——[s] Matt. 13. 39; Rev. 14. 15, 18.——[t] Jer. 51. 33; Hos. 6. 11.——[u] Isa. 63. 3; Lam. 1. 15; Rev. 14. 19, 20.

means the campaign is brought under the divine sanction and favor (1 Sam. vii, 8, 9; Jer. vi, 4). **Wake up**—Or, *stir up*. In a transitive sense, arouse the heroes, for this is no time for slumber. The verbs now change to the third person, a very common transition in vivid poetic or prophetic style. **Draw near**—To battle. **Come up**—Against the enemy (i, 6). Both are technical terms. In Hebrew two short words, which could be uttered very rapidly and thus add force and vividness to the appeal. 10. The agricultural implements are to be beaten into weapons of war. **Plowshares**—Heb. *ittîm*, a rare word (Isa. ii, 4); in 1 Sam. xiii, 20, the same word is employed alongside of one meaning plowshare; for that reason many, following Symmachus, prefer the translation "hoe," "mattock." **Spears**—Not the same word as in the parallel passages, Isa. ii, 4; Mic. iv, 3, but a word otherwise used only in writings from the northern kingdom or from the later period of Hebrew literature. Even the weak is to arouse himself into activity, into heroism, "as it happens frequently when war-like enthusiasm seizes a whole nation." Compare Schiller: "But war brings strength to light; it raises all above the common, even in the coward it begets courage." The injunction here is the very opposite of the promise in Isa. ii, 4; Mic. iv, 3, that in the Messianic age the weapons of war will be turned into agricultural implements.

The first part of verse 11 is better translated, with R. V., "Haste ye, and come, all ye nations round about, and gather yourselves together." **Assemble yourselves** ["Haste ye"]—The matter is to be settled speedily, no delay can be permitted. **All ye heathen** ["nations"] . . . **round about**—Not merely the immediate neighbors, but all nations outside of Israel. In the latter part of verse 11 Joel utters a prayer that Jehovah may send down his heavenly warriors to the assistance of his chosen people. **Thither**—Where the nations have gathered. **Thy mighty ones**—Not the heroes, the mighty ones of Judah, but heavenly powers, angels, who execute the commands of God (Psa. lxviii, 17; ciii, 20; Zech. xiv, 5). In all periods of their history the Israelites believed that Jehovah was fighting their battles; so in this last great conflict he will be the one supreme moving power; he will use his own hosts to bring victory to his people.

To this brief petition Jehovah replies, though not directly, in verses 12, 13. He will look after the interests of his people. Let them come; *I* will be there to meet them. **Sit to judge**—Not to listen to further pleas, but to pronounce sentence. On *Jehoshaphat* compare verse 2; another play upon words in Hebrew. **All the heathen** ["nations"] **round about**—As in verse 11, all the nations of the earth. The sentence is announced in verse 13 in words addressed to the mighty ones of verse 11. They are to discharge their judicial office. The judgment itself is represented under a twofold figure, the reaping of grain and the treading out of grapes (Rev. xiv, 15f., 19f.); the latter is a common picture of terrible judgment. **Harvest**—Not "vintage" (Hitzig, R. V.

flow; for their wickedness *is* great.
14 Multitudes, multitudes, in [x]the valley of [e]decision: for [y]the day of the LORD *is* near in the valley of decision. **15** The [z]sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. **16** The LORD also shall [a]roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and [b]the heavens and the earth shall shake: [c]but the LORD *will be* the [7]hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel. **17** So [d]shall ye know that I *am*

[x] Verse 2.—[e] Or, *concision*, or, *threshing*.—[y] Chap. 2. 1.—[z] Chap. 2. 10, 31.—[a] Jer. 25. 30; chap. 2. 11; Amos 1. 2.

[b] Hag. 2. 6.—[c] Isa. 51. 5, 6.—[7] Heb. *place of repair*, or, *harbor*.—[d] Chap. 2. 27.

margin). **Is ripe**—They are so sinful that they are ready for judgment (Amos viii, 1). **Press**—R. V., "winepress." **Is full**—Another picture of extreme sinfulness, parallel to the preceding and to the following. **Fats**—Better, *vats*. The receptacles for the juice after the grapes are pressed out (ii, 24). The grapes of sin are so numerous and ripe that even before they are artificially crushed the juice is pressed out by their own weight. The same thought is expressed in the last clause of the verse without metaphor.

In the next few verses we have a picture of the judgment. First (verse 14), the tumult made by the nations as they are assembling; the prophet hears them coming. **Multitudes**—The word is repeated for the sake of emphasis: great multitudes; literally, *tumults*, which refers rather to the noise made by the great multitudes than to the numbers. **Valley of decision**—Defines the term used in iii, 12; the judgment will be decisive, the chaff will be separated from the wheat; the doom of the former is certain. **Decision**—Margin, "threshing"; so the great Jewish commentator Kimchi and a few moderns. The judgment is so severe that it may be likened to the threshing of grain (Isa. xxviii, 27; Amos i, 3); but the first interpretation is preferable. The nations are gathered because the judgment is ready to burst forth.

15, 16 While the nations are gathering, the supernatural forebodings of the day are seen (compare ii, 10, 30, 31). In ii, 10, from which passage verse 15 is quoted, these phenomena marked the beginning of the day of judgment upon Judah; here upon the nations. Nothing is said of the execution of the judgment, but the description of the events accompanying it is so vivid that there can be no doubt about the final outcome. **Jehovah . . . shall roar**—The figure of an angry lion is in the prophet's mind. The verb used describes the angry roar with which the lion springs upon the prey (Amos i, 2; Jer. xxv, 30). Jehovah is ready to leap upon the nations. **Utter his voice**—The appearance of Jehovah is described frequently in the imagery of a thunderstorm; his voice is the thunder (Psa. xviii, 9–13). **Zion, . . . Jerusalem**—The temple on Mount Zion in Jerusalem is the earthly abode of Jehovah; from it the manifestations of his power proceed. The very fact that Jehovah has not left the holy city is a favorable sign to the people. **The heavens and the earth shall shake**—A severe earthquake is to accompany the storm.

Thus far the prophet takes us; the sequel imagination must supply. The roaring lion will not allow his prey to escape; in the storm and the earthquake the nations will be annihilated. But it is only to his enemies that Jehovah shows himself terrible. From the awful judgment scene the prophet turns abruptly to describe the fate of the pious people of God. **Hope . . . strength**—Better, with R. V., "refuge . . . stronghold," or "strong tower." They may flee to Jehovah for refuge as terrified inhabitants flee to the citadel of a city for protection. These and similar terms are often applied to Jehovah in the Psalms (xiv, 6; xviii, 3). 17. The present

the LORD your God dwelling in Zion, [e]my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be [g]holy, and there shall no [f]strangers pass through her any more.

18 And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the mountains shall [g]drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, [h]and all the rivers of Judah shall [9]flow with waters, and [i]a fountain shall come forth of the house of the LORD, and shall

[e] Dan. 11. 45; Obad. 16; Zech. 8. 3.—[g] Heb. *holiness.*—[f] Isa. 35. 8; 52. 1; Nah. 1. 15; Zech. 14. 21; Rev. 21. 27.—[g] Amos 9. 13.—[h] Isa. 30. 25.—[9] Heb. *go.*—[i] Psa. 46. 4; Ezek. 47. 1; Zech. 14. 8; Rev. 22. 1.

crisis, the destruction of the nations, and the deliverance of Israel will teach the latter that **Jehovah** is their **God**—They will now recognize him in his supremacy (ii, 27; Hos. ii, 8; Ezek. xxxviii, 23). **Dwelling in Zion**—Synonymous with "in the midst of Israel" (ii, 27); near enough to respond to any appeal for assistance. **Then shall Jerusalem be holy**—Set apart for God, and pure in character (compare ii, 1). Judgment, in the thought of the prophets, always has a purifying effect (Isa. iv, 4). The destruction of the enemies will prevent future defilement by them (Nah. i, 15). **Strangers**—Aliens, members of foreign nations, who have no interest in nor love for the things precious to the Jews (Hos. vii, 9; Jer. xxx, 8).

18–21. After the judgment upon the nations, Judah, under the care and protection of Jehovah, will enjoy the fullness of the divine blessing. The seat of the former world powers will become a barren waste, while in Judah there will be fertility and peace. **18. In that day**—The day of judgment upon the enemies and of deliverance for the Jews, and so the beginning of the Messianic age. Now follows a hyperbolical description of extreme fertility. **Mountains . . . hills**—The territory of Judah was "strewn with limestone rocks. The little soil between yielded only a meager subsistence in return for the most wearisome labor." But the fertility in the new age will be so great that it will seem as if the mountains and hills themselves were giving forth the wine and milk. **New** ["sweet"] **wine**—See on i, 5 (compare Amos ix, 13). **Milk**—Canaan is called a "land flowing with milk and honey" (Exod. iii, 8). The prophet, on the whole adopting the language of Amos, takes the liberty to make the change in accord with the rest of the description. **Rivers** (i, 20) **shall flow with waters**—Water was doled out but sparingly in Judah, most of the brooks dried up entirely during the dry season. That will happen no more; water will be plentiful for man and beast. **A fountain . . . of the house of Jehovah**—There are two other passages speaking of a fountain that shall come forth from Jerusalem or from the temple of Jehovah (Zech. xiv, 8; Ezek. xlvii, 1–12). All three passages may have been suggested by the fact that there was a spring which came forth from beneath the temple in a perennial stream (Isa. viii, 6; compare Psa. xlvi, 4; John ix, 7). "The idea which the three prophets share in common is that these waters should be increased in volume to such an extent as to be capable of fertilizing effectually the barren parts of Judah." **Valley of Shittim**—R. V. margin, "That is, *the valley of acacias.*" **Valley**—Heb. *nahal.* Not the same word as in iii, 12, 14; it corresponds to the Arabic *wady*, a gorge between hills, through which runs a water course which in the rainy season becomes a rushing torrent, while in the dry season it dries up partly or entirely. **Shittim**—Literally, *acacias*—The name of the last encampment of the Israelites before their entrance into Canaan (Num. xxv, 1; Josh. iii, 1); but this does not seem to be the place in the mind of Joel, for "it is hardly likely that the prophet would picture the stream as crossing the Jordan and fertilizing the opposite side." There is to-day a depression southwest of Jerusalem,

water [k]the valley of Shittim. 19 [l]Egypt shall be a desolation, and [m]Edom shall be a desolate wilderness, for the violence *against* the children of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land. 20 But Judah shall [l o]dwell [n]for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation. 21 For I will [o]cleanse their blood *that* I have not cleansed: [p 11]for the LORD dwelleth in Zion.

[k] Num. 25. 1.——[l] Isa. 19. 1, etc.——[m] Jer. 49. 17; Ezek. 25. 12, 13; Amos 1. 11; Obad. 10.——[10] Or, *abide.*——[n] Amos 9. 15.——[o] Isa. 4. 4.——[p] Verse 17; Ezek. 48. 35; Rev. 21. 3.——[11] Or, *even I the LORD that dwelleth in Zion.*

Wady-es-Sunt (*Sant*), probably identical with the *vale of Elah* (1 Sam. xvii, 2), through which runs the road to Ashkelon. *Sunt,* the modern name of this *wady,* is identical with Shittim, and a few scholars (Wellhausen, Nowack) identify the valley mentioned by Joel with this depression. The great majority of scholars, however, think that the prophet uses the name to designate the Kidron valley, or at least a part of the same, now called *Wady-en-Nâr.* It begins northwest of Jerusalem, runs along the east side of the city, separating it from the Mount of Olives, then continues in a southeasterly direction, and finally reaches the Dead Sea about ten miles from its northern end. Acacias still grow on the west shore of the Dead Sea (Tristram, *Land of Israel,* 280, 295). That Ezekiel has this depression in mind is beyond doubt. Whether it or the *Wady-es-Sunt* is referred to here cannot be determined. Wherever located, the term was chosen to designate a barren valley, as the acacia grows in dry soil; even the dry, barren soil will, in the new age, become fertile and productive. That fertility and material prosperity are an essential element of the divine blessing in the Messianic age is frequently taught by the prophets (Hos. ii, 21, 22; Amos ix, 13; Isa. iv, 2).

19. While Judah is thus prospering, the curse of desolation (ii, 3) will fall upon Edom and Egypt on account of the crimes committed against the children of Israel. **Egypt**—Much had Israel suffered from Egypt from the time of the Exodus to the Exile. The only time when friendly relations existed was for a brief period during the reign of Solomon (1 Kings iii, 1; ix, 16, etc.). The friendship during the Assyrian period, condemned by the prophet Isaiah, was not sincere. Egypt was well watered by nature and by artificial irrigation, but this will avail nothing when the blow from Jehovah will fall. **Edom**—Located south and southeast of the Dead Sea. After the destruction of Jerusalem the Edomites occupied territory in southern Judah. They also were long-time enemies of the Israelites, and they are severely condemned for rejoicing over the fall of the holy city (Psa. cxxxvii, 7). It is quite possible that these two hostile nations are mentioned merely as types of all enemies of Israel and of the God of Israel. **Violence**—This violence consisted in the shedding of innocent blood. **In their land**—Not in the land of the Judæans (Wuensche), but of the Egyptians and Edomites. **Shed innocent blood**—Not in time of warfare, but in unprovoked massacres of peaceable Jews dwelling in these lands (Exod. i, 16; Amos i, 11; Obad. 10).

20. While the surrounding nations become desolate Judah and Jerusalem, the dwelling place of Jehovah and of his saints, shall flourish forever. **Dwell**—Margin, "abide"; literally, *sit.* A poetical expression of the idea of continued habitation and prosperity (margin R. V.; Isa. xiii, 20; Jer. xvii, 6, 25). **Forever**—Heb. *'ôlām.* An endless period only in so far as the speaker cannot see the end; the actual extent may be long or short, and must be determined by other considerations. Here synonymous with *from generation to generation.* 21. **For I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed**—The meaning is ex-

pressed more clearly in margin of R. V., "And I will hold (or, *declare*) as innocent their blood, that I have not declared innocent." **For** ["And"]—Better, *And so*, that is, by the execution of judgment upon Edom and Egypt and the showering of abundant blessings upon Judah and Jerusalem. "I will declare as innocent"—The Hebrew is chosen with reference to the expression "innocent blood" in verse 19 (compare Exod. xx, 7; Job ix, 28). So long as Jehovah permitted the Jews to suffer and their enemies to prosper it might be supposed that the former had deserved all their afflictions; but the judgment sent as punishment upon the oppressors is decisive proof of the latter's guilt, and so implies the innocence of the Jewish victims. The emendation of Nowack, "and I will avenge their blood, nor will I suffer (the enemies) to go unpunished," is unnecessary. **Jehovah dwelleth in Zion** (ii, 27; iii, 17)—This clause does not state the reason why all the promises will be fulfilled—namely, because Jehovah is in Zion; nor is it a corroboration of the preceding promise: this shall come to pass as truly as Zion is the habitation of Jehovah; rather a reiteration of the greatest of all promises: The judgment executed, Jehovah will establish himself in Zion forever; never again will he forsake his people so that they become a reproach among their enemies.

The prophecy of Joel opens with a picture of utter hopelessness and despair; it closes with the promise that even the highest hopes of the most optimistic Jews shall be realized in all their fullness.

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF AMOS.

The Person of the Prophet.

Amos is the name of the prophet whose book occupies in the Hebrew as well as in the English Bible third place among the Minor Prophets; in LXX. second place, following Hosea. It may be regarded as settled, however, that with the possible exception of the authors of a few prophetic fragments we have in Amos the first of the literary prophets, the prophets records of whose discourses have been preserved. The exceptions are Isa. xv, 1—xvi, 12, which Isaiah himself refers to as something having been delivered "in time past" (xvi, 13), and Mic. iv, 1-4 (see at the close of Mic. iv, 5; compare Isa. ii, 2-4). As a result the Book of Amos is of great importance in the study of the religious development of Israel, as a witness to the beliefs current among the Hebrews in the eighth century B. C.

The name of the prophet—Heb. *'Amōs*—means *burdened,* or *burden-bearer;* it must not be confused, as was done by the Greek and Latin fathers, with *'Amōs,* the name of the father of Isaiah, which comes from an entirely different root in Hebrew.

About the personal history of Amos we know only what the book tells us. Where he was born we are not told; his home was in Tekoa (i, 1), which has been sought in different parts of Palestine but is undoubtedly to be identified with the modern *Tekū'a,* on the high ground of Judah; about twelve miles south of Jerusalem and six miles south of Bethlehem. Jerome speaks of Tekoa as abounding in shepherds with their flocks, the soil being too sandy and dry to be cultivated for grain. Amos was not a prophet by education or profession,

nor did he enter the prophetic office by way of the prophetic guilds. His occupation was that of a herdsman (i, 1; vii, 14) —Heb. *nôḳēdh,* the keeper of a certain species of sheep called among the Arabs *naḳad.* It is a sheep small and stunted in growth, with short legs and ill-formed face, but esteemed on account of its choice wool. Its lack of beauty has given rise to a saying, "More homely than a *naḳad.*" In Arabic the *naḳḳād* is the keeper of this kind of sheep, and the Hebrew *nôḳēdh* is a word of similar import. The same term is applied in 2 Kings iii, 4, to King Mesha of Moab, Eng. "sheep master." In vii, 14, Amos calls himself a "tender of cattle," Heb. *bôḳēr,* a word which occurs only here and may be a mistake for *nôḳēdh,* the two resembling each other quite closely in Hebrew; or *bôḳēr* must be used in the general sense "herdsman" (so English versions).

Amos calls himself also *bôlēs shiḳemîm* (vii, 14)—A. V., "a gatherer of sycomore fruit"; R. V., "a dresser of sycomore trees." "As you will still find everywhere on the border of the Syrian desert shepherds nourishing a few fruit trees round the chief well of their pasture, in order to vary their milk diet, so in some low oasis in the wilderness of Judæa Amos cultivated the poorest but the most easily grown of fruits, the sycomore" (G. A. Smith). *Balas* in Ethiopic means *fig;* in Arabic also it denotes a certain species of fig. In Hebrew, it may be inferred, it denoted the similarly shaped fruit of the sycomore; and the verb derived from it must signify *to deal with, to handle,* or *to dress* the fruit of the sycomore. The *shiḳemāh,* "sycomore," or "fig mulberry tree," not our sycamore, grew abundantly in southern Palestine. It attains the size of a walnut tree, has wide-spreading branches, and on account of its shade is often planted by the wayside (Luke xix, 4). The fruit grows on little sprigs rising directly out of the stem, in clusters like grapes. It is like a small fig in shape and size, insipid and woody in taste. It is infested with a small insect, and, unless the fruit is punctured to allow the insect to escape, it does not become eatable. With the

insect escapes a bitter juice, and then the fruit ripens and becomes eatable, though never very palatable. The operation of puncturing the fruit is probably meant in the case of Amos. LXX. renders "to prick," or, "to nip."

The sycomore does not grow at so high a level as Tekoa in Judah, and this fact has been urged against locating the home of Amos there; but there is no necessity for supposing that his sycomore trees were located in Tekoa, or even in the immediate neighborhood of the town. Tekoa was situated on a detached hill, about twenty-seven hundred feet high; eastward this hill slopes down to the *wilderness of Judah;* to the southeast there is a deep valley running to the Dead Sea. Somewhere in these lower parts, where a milder temperature prevailed, these groves may have been located.

Both occupations were rather humble. Amos may have partly or entirely owned the flocks and the trees, but the statement that he "followed the flock" (vii, 14) indicates that he was not a wealthy sheepmaster; yet he must have been prosperous enough to employ an assistant when he journeyed to Beth-el; for it is not likely that he took the flocks with him, or that he disposed of them before undertaking the journey. The language of the prophecy and the favorite figures bear witness that Amos was a countryman accustomed to life in the open air (ii, 13; iii, 4, 5, 12; iv, 2, 13; v, 8; vi, 12; vii, 1-3; ix, 5, 6, 9, etc.).

It was while following his daily occupation that the divine call reached him (vii, 15); but the call did not find him unprepared. He belonged to the "right-minded minority" among the Hebrews that in spite of all influences to the contrary retained its faith and loyalty to Jehovah. With an open mind and a quickened conscience he undoubtedly often meditated upon the things of God as he dwelt in the solitude of the desert. Accustomed to the simpler life of the herdsman, he would feel more keenly the extravagance, luxury, and corruption of the aristocracy. Compelled to defend himself and his flock against the dangers of the desert, he would not easily shrink back

from the dangers confronting a prophet of Jehovah. Carefully watching every shadow and noise, not knowing how soon a wild beast would rush upon him from the apparent quietness, he readily developed the vigilance and power of discernment which kept him from being deceived by the superficial piety and prosperity of his countrymen.

The influence of the lonely shepherd life in shaping Amos into a "vessel meet for the Master's use" cannot be easily overestimated. But Amos did not receive his training exclusively in the solitude of the desert. "As a wool grower Amos must have had his yearly journeys among the markets of the land; and to such were probably due his opportunities for familiarity with northern Israel, the originals of his vivid pictures of her town life, her commerce, and her worship at the great sanctuaries." To these sights Amos brought from the desert a penetrating vision, a quickened conscience, and keen powers of discernment. "He saw the raw facts—the poverty, the cruel negligence of the rich, the injustice of the rulers, the immoralities of the priests. The meaning of these things he questioned with as much persistency as he questioned every suspicious sound or sight upon the pastures of Tekoa. He had no illusions; he knew a mirage when he saw one. Neither the military pride of the people, fostered by recent successes over Syria, nor the dogmas of their religion, which asserted Jehovah's swift triumph over the heathen, could prevent him from knowing that the immorality of Israel meant Israel's political downfall. He was one of those recruits from common life by whom religion and the state have always been reformed. Springing from the laity and very often from among the working classes, their freedom from dogmas and routine, as well as from the compromising interests of wealth, rank, and party, renders them experts in life to a degree that almost no professional priest, statesman, or journalist, however honest or sympathetic, can rival. *Into politics they bring facts, but into religion they bring vision.*"

Such a man, prepared, under the divine providence, by his

very occupation, was Amos when he heard the call of Jehovah. A man of his character *cannot* refuse to obey the divine voice. He left his flocks and sycomore groves and journeyed to Beth-el, the religious center of the northern kingdom. There under the shadow of the royal sanctuary (vii, 13) he delivered his God-given message of warning and exhortation. How long he remained at Beth-el we do not know. Finally Amaziah, the chief priest, aroused by the announcement of the overthrow of the sanctuaries and of the dynasty of Jeroboam, accused Amos of treason and bade him return to his own home and make a living there. Amos was not frightened so easily; he defended his action and repeated his message of judgment.

Of Amos's later life we know nothing. But in view of the well-planned disposition of his prophecies, and in view of the reference "two years before the earthquake" (i, 1)—showing that the words were not written until after the earthquake had occurred—it is reasonable to suppose that after he had completed his prophetic ministration he returned to Tekoa, took up his former occupation, and at his leisure arranged his prophecies in their present form in writing, or at least, that they were written down under his direction. A late Christian tradition, whose origin is obscure, asserts that Amos was frequently struck by Amaziah, and that finally he was fatally wounded by the latter's son, because the prophet rebuked him for worshiping the "calves," that Amos survived until he reached his own land, died there, and was buried with his fathers. Jerome and Eusebius affirm that in their days the tomb of Amos was shown at Tekoa.

The Time of the Prophet.

1. *Date.*—According to i, 1, Amos prophesied (1) while Jeroboam was king of Israel, and Uzziah king of Judah. The longest possible reign that may be ascribed to Uzziah covers approximately 789-737 B. C.; that of Jeroboam II, 782-741. According to this note the ministry of Amos falls between 782 and 741 B. C. That Jeroboam was still upon the throne

is implied in vii, 9, 10. (2) "Two years before the earthquake." This earthquake is spoken of also in Zech. xiv, 5, as having occurred in the days of Uzziah, but its exact date is not known. No more direct information concerning the date of Amos is found anywhere in the Old Testament, but the date may be fixed more definitely by inference. In 2 Kings xiv, 25, it is said of Jeroboam II that he restored "the border of Israel from the entrance of Hamath unto the sea of the Arabah." In vi, 14, Amos predicts that an enemy will afflict Israel "from the entrance of Hamath unto the brook of the Arabah." From this we may safely infer that the conquests of Jeroboam had already taken place when Amos arose. Besides, the tone of the entire book places it beyond doubt that the evil consequences of the prosperity resulting from the successful undertakings of Jeroboam had made themselves felt in a marked degree when Amos was called to his prophetic work. We may not be far out of the way, then, if we place the activity of Amos after the middle of Jeroboam's reign, about 760-755 B. C.

2. *Condition of the Country.*—The period in which Amos arose as a prophet of Jehovah was one of great external prosperity for both Israel and Judah. Israel had but very recently recovered from a state of extreme depression. During the reigns of Jehu and Jehoahaz it had suffered very severely from the Syrians. Hazael took all the territory east of the Jordan (2 Kings x, 32, 33); and of Jehoahaz's reign it is said that "the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Israel, and he delivered them into the hand of Hazael king of Syria, and into the hand of Ben-hadad the son of Hazael, continually" (2 Kings xiii, 3). And again, "He left not to Jehoahaz of the people save fifty horsemen, and ten chariots, and ten thousand footmen; for the king of Syria destroyed them" (verse 7).

Israel seemed on the verge of destruction; but it revived once more. Under the successor of Jehoahaz, Joash (or Jehoash), the fortunes of Israel began to turn. He "took again out of the hand of Ben-hadad the son of Hazael the cities

which he had taken out of the hand of Jehoahaz his father by war. Three times did Joash smite him, and recovered the cities of Israel" (2 Kings xiii, 25). In part, at least, these victories may have been due to the fact that at about this time the forces of Syria were needed for the defense of their home land against a powerful enemy in the southeast, the Assyrians. The success of Israel continued under Jeroboam II; he became a *saviour* of Israel (2 Kings xiv, 27), recovered all the territory that had been lost, and added to Israel's territory in every direction; he even captured Damascus (2 Kings xiv, 23-29). As a result of these successes in war, the revival of commerce, and the new development of the internal resources Israel rose to a pitch of power and prosperity greater than the nation had enjoyed since the division of the kingdom.

But the prosperity was accompanied and followed by grave evils. The brief record in the Book of Kings does little more than give an outline of the external history. The internal social, moral, and religious conditions appear more plainly in the writings of the eighth century prophets, Amos and Hosea in Israel, Isaiah and Micah in Judah.

The Book of Amos presents a vivid picture of the prosperity in Israel. The luxury of the rich, made possible by increased wealth, met the eyes of the simple herdman on every hand. The palaces built of "hewn stone" (v, 11), some of them "paneled with ivory" (iii, 15), the pretentious summer residences and winter residences (iii, 15), the extravagant interior finish (iii, 12; vi, 4), all were to him evidence that the former simplicity and stability were threatened with extinction. He could not avoid seeing or hearing the drunken revelries (vi, 5, 6), nor could he be blind to the mad extravagance which found satisfaction only in possessing the choicest and best of everything, the chief oils (vi, 6), the most delicate meats (vi, 4), the best music (vi, 5). The sanctuaries shared in the general prosperity. The chief sanctuary at Beth-el was under royal patronage (vii, 13), it was thronged with worshipers (ix, 1); other sanctuaries were diligently visited (iv, 4;

v, 5; viii, 14); offerings and tithes were brought regularly and in abundance; feasts were celebrated with all possible pomp (iv, 4, 5; v, 21-23).

A nation so prosperous and so zealous in the fulfillment of its religious obligations might well be called blessed. But the prophet was not deceived by the superficial prosperity; he saw the dark side of the nation's life with equal clearness. The wealth and luxury of the rich were obtained by violence and robbery (iii, 10); by oppression of the poor and needy, who were driven into actual slavery by their cruel creditors (ii, 6, 7; viii, 6); by dishonest trading, in which every possible advantage was taken of the unsuspecting buyer (viii, 4-6); by exacting presents and bribes (v, 11, 12). Women were no better than men; to satisfy their appetites they urged their husbands to greater cruelties (iv, 1). Public and private virtue had almost completely died out. The corruption of the courts of justice was notorious (v, 7, 10, 12; vi, 12); the poor could get no satisfactory hearing, justice was bought and sold (v, 12). Immoralities were practiced without shame (ii, 7). Tradesmen were impatient at the interruption of their greedy pursuits by the sacred days (viii, 5). Humane feelings were smothered (ii, 8). The situation was the more hopeless because the leaders, who should have been the protectors and guardians of the people, were the leaders in vice and crime (vi, 1-6), and were indifferent to the "affliction of Joseph" (vi, 6). Those who attempted to reprove the wrong and uphold the right were despised and abhorred (v, 10; vii, 10-13). With this flagrant disregard of all human and divine law there went, strangely enough, a feeling of absolute security and self-righteousness. The great mass of people believed that in view of their painstaking observance of the external ceremonial they had a claim upon the divine favor, and that Jehovah was bound to be with them and to protect them from all harm (v, 14). This deplorable religious, social, and moral condition was all due to a false conception of the character of Jehovah (see below, p. 207). "When men corrupt the image of God in their

hearts, they forthwith proceed to the debasing of themselves, and then to such enmity and strife that the bonds of society are wholly broken."

In the midst of the social abuses, the moral corruption, and the religious self-contentment the message of Amos fell like a thunderbolt.

The Book of the Prophet.

1. *General.*—It was suggested (p. 195) that Amos himself may have put his prophecies into writing, but that admission does not decide what was the extent of the book as it came from the hand of the prophet (see below, pp. 213ff.); nor does it prove that he embodied in the book the utterances as they were spoken originally. He may have omitted in writing some things which he had spoken; on the other hand, he may have added things not spoken previously. At any rate, the words of Kirkpatrick seem quite justified: "The book bears evidence of more orderly and systematic arrangement than would be likely to have characterized the spoken prophecies."

That the prophecies were arranged in the chronological order of their delivery may be doubted, but a logical arrangement is clearly visible. In broad outline the development of the thought is as follows: The book opens with *threats* of judgment against the surrounding nations, against Judah, and especially against Israel; these are followed by a presentation of the *reasons* for the judgment; five visions of the *execution* of the judgment; and after a brief reference to the *effects* upon both godly and ungodly the book closes with a description of the *exaltation and glory* of the remnant that will escape the judgment.

Opinions concerning Amos' style have changed greatly since Jerome called him "rude in speech but not in knowledge." A few quotations will illustrate the estimate placed by modern scholarship upon the literary skill of the prophet: "He deserves to rank among the first of the sacred writers." "He is very little inferior to the best Old Testament writers." It would be difficult to form a better brief characterization of the style

of the Book of Amos than that by Driver: "The style of Amos possesses high literary merit. His language . . . is pure, his syntax is idiomatic, his sentences are smoothly constructed and clear. The even flow of his language contrasts remarkably with the short, abrupt clauses which his contemporary Hosea loves [see p. 38]. Amos's literary power is shown in the regularity of structure which often characterizes his periods, as i, 3—ii, 6 (a cleverly constructed and impressive introduction of the prophet's theme, evidently intended to lead up to Israel, ii, 6ff.), iv, 6-11 (the fivefold refrain), and in the visions (vii, 1, 4, 7; viii, 1; ix, 1); in the fine climax (iii, 3-8); in the balanced clauses, the well-chosen images, the effective contrasts, in such passages as i, 2; iii, 2; v, 2, 21-24; vi, 7, 11; viii, 10; ix, 2-4, as well as in the ease with which he manifestly writes, and the skill with which his theme is gradually developed."

2. *Contents.*—The Book of Amos falls naturally into three divisions: Chapters i, ii, the Prologue; chapters iii—vi, a series of discourses; chapters vii—ix, a series of visions, interrupted by a piece of narrative and short remarks on the same subjects as are discussed in chapters iii—vi.

After the title (i, 1), giving the name, home, occupation, and approximate date of the prophet, and the preface (i, 2), announcing in general terms the approach of judgment, Amos proceeds to announce the wrath of God upon the surrounding nations "for three transgressions and for four," upon Damascus (3-5), Philistia (6-8), Phœnicia (9, 10), Edom (11, 12), Ammon (13-15), Moab (ii, 1-3), Judah (4, 5). Having gained the good will of his hearers by declaring the doom of their enemies, he breaks into a message of denunciation and judgment against Israel, for whose temporal and spiritual well-being Jehovah had made extraordinary efforts (6-16). The condemnation is chiefly an account of two transgressions: oppression of the poor, and immorality and self-indulgence practiced in the name of religion. These verses (ii, 6-16) may be called the thesis of the whole book.

The second main division (chapters iii—vi) contains several

discourses expanding and justifying the indictment and sentence in ii, 6-16. The first discourse (iii, 1—iv, 3) is intended primarily for the ruling classes. The prophet calls attention to the special favors received by Israel from Jehovah, and implies that these favors carried with them unusual opportunities and obligations. Since Israel failed to embrace these, Jehovah is bound to visit upon the neglectful people all their iniquities (iii, 1, 2). This startling announcement made it necessary for the prophet to defend his message and authority. He does this by a series of illustrations showing that every effect presupposes a cause (3-6); on the same principle his prophesying presupposes a commission, a call to prophesy (7, 8). Having presented his credentials, he continues the message of denunciation and judgment. He summons the surrounding nations, who possess much less moral and religious light than the Hebrews, to testify against Israel, to decide whether, according to their lower standards, the judgment is not merited (9, 10). The sentence is declared just; therefore Jehovah will speedily send an avenger, who will lay waste the corrupt city and the sanctuaries of the land so that only a small remnant shall escape (11-15). The noble women of Samaria who, in order to satisfy their unholy appetites, urge their husbands to greater exactions and more cruel oppression, must share the punishment; they will be driven into exile (iv, 1-3).

The second discourse (iv, 4-13) is addressed to the people at large. In an ironical vein Amos exhorts them to persist in their heartless ceremonial worship, "for this pleaseth *you*," implying that Jehovah takes no delight in it (4, 5). By a long series of calamities Jehovah has sought to make plain his dissatisfaction with their conduct, and to bring them to their senses, but in vain (6-11), hence he will strike a final blow (12, 13).

The next address (v, 1-17) contains lamentations, exhortations, reproofs, and threats of ruin. It opens with a dirge over the downfall of Israel (1-3). This fate is merited because

the people have utterly disregarded the demands of Jehovah; they have sought him by a ritual which he does not value, and have spurned the virtues which he prizes (4-10). Improvement seems out of the question, therefore swift judgment will overtake them (11-13); nevertheless, sincere repentance may yet result in the salvation of at least a remnant (14, 15). The prophet seems to be conscious that such a hope is vain; at any rate, he reiterates the announcement of doom (16, 17).

In verses 18-27 follows a new section, whose theme is the darkness and despair of the *day of Jehovah*. It begins with a startling woe upon those who are anxious for that day to come. They will be disappointed, for instead of being a day of salvation and triumph it will be a day of terror and disaster (18-20). This is due to the fact that they are enemies of Jehovah, their service is an abomination to him, for it is utterly opposed to his requirements (21-25); therefore the terrors of Jehovah will fall upon them (26, 27).

In vi, 1-14, the final discourse in the second main division of the book, a woe is pronounced upon the luxurious, the self-confident, and the proud. In vi, 1, the prophet turns to the leaders of the people, who, reveling in their wealth and luxury, were perfectly content with the present state of things, and were absolutely indifferent to the ruin threatening the people. For this indifference they shall surely be carried into exile "with the first that go captive" (1-7). The whole city and nation shall be given up to destruction, because they have perverted truth and righteousness and have placed their confidence exclusively in their own resources (8-14).

The third main division (vii, 1—ix, 15) consists principally of visions picturing the execution of the judgment threatened in chapters iii—vi. The first two visions—the swarm of locusts, and the devouring fire—describe calamities whose terrors are already felt, and which threaten complete annihilation, but Jehovah, at the intercession of the prophet, averts the final catastrophe (vii, 1-6). The third vision—the master builder with the plumb line—does not picture the calamity itself, but

presents Jehovah as decreeing the utter destruction of the people (7-9). The three visions are followed by an historical section (10-17), in which Amos relates his experience in Beth-el; how Amaziah attempted to drive him from the sanctuary there, how he refused to be silent, and how he reiterated and expanded his previous threats. The fourth vision—the basket of summer fruit—announces that the time of mercy is past: "The end has come upon . . . Israel" (viii, 1-3). To this vision are added fresh denunciations and threats (4-14), intended especially for the greedy merchants. The fifth vision —the smitten sanctuary—differs in form from the preceding four, but its purpose is the same: it declares that Jehovah is determined to make an end of the "sinful kingdom" (ix, 1-6). The prophet combats again the misapprehension that the people's former choice by Jehovah is a guarantee of permanent security (7, 8). Once more he announces judgment, this time emphasizing its disciplinary purpose, and promising the preservation of a sound kernel (9, 10).

The book closes with promises of a bright future to this faithful remnant. The dynasty of David will be restored to power (11), the surrounding nations will be reconquered (12), extreme fertility will bless the soil (13), the exiles will be restored to their own land, there to live forever in prosperity and joy (14, 15).

Outline.

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The Teaching of Amos.

For convenience' sake the teaching of Amos may be discussed under two heads: 1. The Theology of Amos, that is, the prophet's conception of Jehovah, the God of Israel; 2. Amos's conception of Israel, the people of Jehovah.

1. *The Theology of Amos.*—Amos is an *uncompromising monotheist;* he believes that there is but one true God, namely, Jehovah, whose prophet he knows himself to be. That Jehovah was the only God of Israel had been taught by religious leaders since the days of Moses; some may have had a glimpse

even of the larger truth that he is the God of the whole world; Amos has no doubts on this point. Jehovah is to him, in a special sense, the God of Israel, but he also controls the destinies of other nations (ix, 7; i, 3—ii, 3). He is nowhere called the "God of Israel," and there is no suggestion anywhere that Amos believed in the existence of other gods. True, he nowhere teaches the dogma of monotheism, but, as Cheyne says, "He is to all intents and purposes an ethical monotheist." So also Marti: "No one can fail to observe how in this belief of Amos monotheism is present in essence even if not in name." Concerning the nature and character of this *one* God Amos teaches: (1) He is a *person.* Jehovah "swears by himself" (vi, 8; compare iv, 2). He is capable of every emotion and volition of which a person is capable: he "repents" (vii, 3); he communicates with others (iii, 7); he "issues commands" (ix, 3-4); he determines upon lines of action (vii, 3; vi, 8); he "hates" and "abhors" (v, 21, 22; vi, 8). (2) He is *all-powerful.* The omnipotence of Jehovah is seen in creation. Jehovah created the heavens and the earth and all the hosts of them (iv, 13; v, 8, 9; ix, 6). But Amos is not a deist; his God did not withdraw when the universe was created; he is still supreme, and his hand controls all the laws and forces of nature. He changes darkness into light, and light into darkness, whether in the ordinary course of nature or by an eclipse. He "calleth for the waters of the sea and poureth them out upon the face of the earth"; he withholds rain, sends locusts, causes blasting and mildew, pestilence and earthquakes (iv, 6-11, 13; v, 8; viii, 9; ix, 5, 6). An even stronger proof of the supreme power of Jehovah is the fact that he determines the destiny of the nations, of Israel (ii, 9-11; ix, 7), of the Ethiopians, the Philistines, and the Syrians (ix, 7; compare i, 3—ii, 3). He directs the movements of the Assyrian world power and uses it to execute judgment (i, 3—ii, 3; ii, 13ff.; iv, 2, 3; v, 27; vi, 14, etc.). The supreme majesty and power of Jehovah is expressed also in the divine titles used by the prophet: "The Lord Jehovah" (twenty times); "Jehovah, the

God of hosts" (iv, 13; v, 14, 15; vi, 8, 14; compare v, 27); "the Lord, Jehovah of hosts" (ix, 5); "the Lord Jehovah, the God of hosts" (iii, 13); "Jehovah, the God of hosts, the Lord" (v, 16). See on Hos. xii, 5. (3) The *omnipresence* of Jehovah is at least implied in chapters i and ii (compare ix, 8), and is unambiguously taught in ix, 2ff., one of the most terrible, and at the same time most sublime, passages in the book. (4) The same passage implies the divine *omniscience*. Jehovah knows the abode of the fugitive sinners. Omniscience is needed also that he may declare "unto man what is his (man's) thought" (iv, 13). (5) Another very important element in the theology of Amos is his conception of Jehovah as an *ethical being*. Righteousness is the chief attribute of Jehovah. This truth did not originate with Amos, but his contemporaries seem to have forgotten the teaching of Amos's predecessors; they believed that Jehovah was partial to them, no matter how sinful their conduct (v, 14), and that he took no delight in foreigners, no matter how good and sincere they might be. This false idea of Jehovah the prophet sought to remove, in part by pointing out that Jehovah's sway extends over the whole known world, but more especially by emphasizing that in the administration of his government he is guided by ethical principles. He deals with the nations of the earth, Israel included, according to their attitude toward him (iii, 1, 2; vii, 7-9; viii, 1-3; ix, 8, and *passim*). The popular misapprehension of the character of Jehovah found expression in a mistaken religious zeal; the people thought that so long as external religious requirements were met the favor of Jehovah was assured (iv, 5); but, says Amos, a righteous God can take no delight in such superficial ceremonies; he hates them; they are an abomination to him (iv, 4, 5; v, 5, 21ff.). That Jehovah is no respecter of persons, but of character, is implied also in the obedience with which Amos responded to the divine call (vii, 15; compare iii, 8). Jehovah chooses his workmen regardless of rank or occupation. (6.) The persistent emphasis upon the righteousness of Jehovah gives to the message of Amos a stern and

severe tone; nevertheless, it is not correct to say, as has been done, that Amos saw only the stern side of the divine character, that he thought of God exclusively as the righteous king and merciless judge. True, the word "love," or "loving-kindness," a favorite word with Hosea, is not found in the Book of Amos, but there is evidence that the prophet conceived Jehovah to be a *merciful* God. He was not afraid to intercede twice on behalf of the sinful nation (vii, 2, 5), and he held out the hope that under certain conditions Jehovah might be "gracious to a remnant of Joseph" (v, 15). On the other hand, his promise of salvation (ix, 9) was due less to his conception of Jehovah as a merciful God than to his conviction that Jehovah was righteous and just; fairness and justice demanded the preservation of the faithful.

To what extent Amos condemned the "calf" worship of Jehovah at Beth-el and Dan as such it may be difficult to say. The condemnation of the local sanctuaries (iii, 14; iv, 4, 5; v, 4; viii, 14) may have been due to the corruption prevalent at these places, and not to a desire to express disapproval of that form of worship. On the other hand, the passages may be interpreted as implying a repudiation of "calf" worship as such. A. B. Davidson, for many years a close student of Hebrew prophecy, may be right when he says: "Those passages (iii, 14; iv, 4, 5; v, 4) appear to carry in them a repudiation of the calves. . . . If the prophet's language be not a verbal protest against the calf worship it is because it is a great deal more; it is a protest which goes much deeper than the calves and is directed to something behind them. The calves and the whole ritual service, as it was practiced, were but symptoms of that which gave offense to the prophet, which was the spirit of the worship, the mind of the worshipers, the conception of Deity which they had in worshiping and to which they offered their worship."

2. *Amos's Conception of Israel.*—The prophet's teaching concerning Israel is intimately connected with his theology; indeed, it is "but a reflection of his doctrine, or a deduction

from it." (1) Fundamental is the conviction that *Israel is the people of Jehovah.* He chose the sons of Abraham and delivered them from Egypt; he led them in the wilderness and established them in the promised land. He has an interest in Israel such as he has in no other people (ii, 9, 10; iii, 1, 2). (2) The *Israelites,* being the people of Jehovah, *should reflect the character of their God;* otherwise intimate fellowship between God and people is not possible (iii, 2; v, 4; vi, 14; v, 24). (3) To enable Israel to know the will of God and reflect his character *Jehovah revealed himself to them* through prophets and Nazirites (ii, 11; iii, 7), through the law (ii, 4—of Judah), through Amos (iii, 8; vii, 15), and through the acts of his providence (iv, 6-11). In this manner he favored Israel beyond all other nations; but the prophet makes it also clear that these special privileges brought increased responsibilities and obligations. (4) These responsibilities the people failed to meet; consequently *they fell far short of the divine ideal for them.* Righteousness was trampled under foot (v, 7); the poor and needy were mercilessly oppressed (ii, 6, 7; iii, 10; v, 11, 12, etc.); the name of Jehovah was dishonored by the immoral practices connected with the worship (ii, 7, 8); the whole worship was carried on in a manner that made it an abomination to him (v, 21-25). From beginning to end the prophecy abounds with pictures of Israel's disregard of the divine purpose for them. (5) Israel's utter corruption is responsible for the threats of judgment so frequent in the book. The very righteousness of Jehovah demanded that *he should execute judgment upon the sinful kingdom* (ix, 8; ii, 13-16; iii, 14, 15). Ordinarily the prophet speaks of the judgment as taking the form of a foreign invasion and an exile (iii, 11; iv, 3; v, 27; vi, 14, etc.), which will result in the destruction of Israel as a nation. (6) Though Amos looked for the passing away of the nation, *he expected the preservation of a remnant* (v, 15; ix, 9). Around this remnant centers his hope for the future. It is worthy of note that the prophet's picture of this remnant's glorification is one of temporal felicity, and that it does not

include a personal Messiah, though the future glory is connected with the dynasty of David. The latter is to be restored to influence and power, and under its leadership the surrounding nations are to be reconquered. The soil is to be blessed with extreme fertility, and in the enjoyment of extraordinary prosperity the restored nation is to be established forever. A very simple picture indeed. With much truth says Kirkpatrick of the prophet Amos, "He is still the representative of a rudimentary stage of the prophetic revelation, to be enlarged, developed, spiritualized by his successors."

The same author points out the following as the most important permanent moral and religious truths in the Book of Amos: (1) Justice between man and man is one of the divine foundations of society; (2) Privilege implies responsibility; (3) Failure to recognize responsibility will surely bring punishment; (4) Nations, and, by analogy, individuals, are bound to live up to the measure of light and knowledge granted to them; (5) The most elaborate worship is but an insult to God when offered by those who have no mind to conform to his demands.

The Place of Amos in the Religious Development of Israel.

The significance of Amos and of the other eighth century prophets for the development of pure Jehovah religion cannot easily be overestimated. During that century the religion of Jehovah was confronted by two serious dangers. One of these arose out of the new prosperity which had come to Israel under Jeroboam II. The moral and religious conditions in Israel at the time of Amos have already been discussed (pp. 197ff.); it remains only to say a few words concerning the real significance of this condition of affairs. It meant that the great mass of people had an entirely false conception of the character of Jehovah. If this misconception was suffered to continue the religion of Jehovah was destined to sink to the level of that of the surrounding nations; true religion would be lost to the world. The other danger arose from the steady advance of the

Assyrian armies. The Assyrians seemed invincible, and nearer and nearer did they come to Israel. Would Jehovah protect his people? If he failed to do so, was it not because the gods of the invaders were stronger than he? If he could not save his worshipers, was it worth while to remain loyal to him? Upon a correct answer to these and similar questions, which would inevitably arise, hung the faith of the Hebrews. In this crisis the eighth century prophets saved Israel's faith by placing in a clearer light than ever before the true character of Jehovah. They pointed out that he was holy and righteous; that the nation was guilty in his sight; that his very character compelled him to punish them; that he was using the Assyrian world power as an instrument of scourging; and that the ultimate purpose of God in all this was to purify his people, in order to prepare them for the carrying out of his gracious purpose. The emphasis of the divine holiness and righteousness was to counteract the internal religious danger; the emphasis of the control exercised by Jehovah over the Assyrians was to show that the victories of the Assyrians did not prove the superiority of their deities, that Jehovah was still supreme.

Amos was the first of the four great prophets to restate the true conception of Jehovah; and with him opened an era of constructive thought hardly surpassed in the world's history. It is not without reason, therefore, that Cornill exclaims, "Amos is one of the most wonderful appearances in the history of the human spirit"; or that G. A. Smith says, "The Book of Amos opens one of the greatest stages in the religious development of mankind"; or that W. Robertson Smith calls Amos "the founder of a new type of prophecy." Nevertheless, though these eulogies are well merited, it is not correct to say, as has been done at times, that Amos "marks an *entirely new* departure in the religious history of Israel"—in other words, that he is the original founder of *Yahwism,* the religion of Jehovah. The entire tone of the book, as well as specific references, refute this idea. Amos regards himself as a reformer, not as

an innovator. He evidently assumes that the people might have known Jehovah and his will, for he represents their wrongdoing not as the result of intellectual ignorance, but as due to the stubbornness of their hearts (ii, 12); he is not conscious of preaching a new faith, but he strives to recall the people to allegiance to Jehovah, from whom they have wandered. Besides, Amos refers to former prophets (ii, 11; compare iii, 7), and apparently he considers himself the legitimate successor of these. A. B. Davidson expresses the true view when he says: "The springs at least of all prophecy can be seen in the two prophets of northern Israel; but the rains which fed those fountains fell in the often unrecorded past." Another evidence that Amos was preceded by a line of prophets is presented by the theological style and terminology of the Book of Amos. It is almost incredible that a pioneer in this field should use as fluent style and as fixed terminology as does the author of this book. Is it not much more rational to believe that the prophets alluded to in ii, 11, developed gradually what may be called a *prophetic* style?

In this connection may be noted briefly Amos's knowledge of the nation's history, laws, and religious practices. The prophet manifests a very remarkable familiarity with events in the early history of his people. As illustrations may be mentioned the history of Jacob and Esau (i, 11), "Moab shall die with tumult" (ii, 2; compare Num. xxiv, 17), the Exodus (ii, 10), the wanderings in the desert (ii, 10; v, 25), the stature of the Amorites (ii, 9), the fame of David as musician (vi, 5). This humble countryman is thoroughly familiar with the history of his nation and understands its religious significance; but what is more, he presupposes the same familiarity in his hearers and readers; otherwise his appeals would frequently be without force. He is also acquainted with some of the laws contained in the Pentateuch. In ii, 8, he condemns the breach of the law concerning pledges (Exod. xxii, 26). Judah he accuses of rejecting the law of Jehovah and his statutes (ii, 4). The existence of a fully developed and well-ordered

ceremonial is presupposed in the book. The offering of "leavened" sacrifices is condemned (iv, 5); new moons and Sabbaths were observed by abstaining from ordinary labor (viii, 5); feasts were kept and solemn assemblies were held (v, 21; viii, 10); sacrifices, burnt offerings, meal offerings, peace offerings, and freewill offerings were presented to Jehovah (v, 22; iv, 5); tithes were paid (iv, 4).

This familiarity is certainly remarkable, and from it some have argued that Amos was familiar with the Pentateuch in its present form. But this sweeping inference is not warranted by the facts. Not a single statement of Amos proves or even implies the existence of the Pentateuch in its present form. One may go even farther and say that there is nothing in the Book of Amos to place it beyond doubt that any part of the Pentateuch was known to the prophet in written form. The only thing beyond question is that much of the material found in the Pentateuch was common property of the people in the eighth century B. C. Beyond this point we are in the realm of conjecture and speculation. Nevertheless, if Amos committed his own prophecy to writing (p. 195), it is at least possible, or even probable, that he was acquainted with some written documents. There *may* have been, there probably were, in existence some historical documents or some writings of a legal character from which the prophet gathered his historical and legal information; but their extent or exact contents cannot be determined from the Book of Amos. Hos. viii, 12, makes it certain that in the eighth century B. C. written laws were in existence, but this passage also leaves undecided the extent of the legal system.

The Integrity of the Book of Amos.

As in the case of Hosea, until quite recently no doubts were raised concerning the integrity of the Book of Amos. Ewald said: "This little book forms a whole complete in itself and left Amos's hands just as we have it. The heading alone is probably from another, but in any case from an early, hand."

Hitzig also seems to have been convinced that there are no interpolations in the book. Duhm, in 1875, questioned the authorship of ii, 4, 5; iv, 13; v, 8, 9; ix, 5, 6, on the ground that these passages interrupt the connection. However, the additional statement that the last three passages presuppose Job makes it probable that he was influenced also by theological considerations. Nearly all commentators who have written since the publication of Duhm's doubts have rejected some parts of the book as later interpolations. Wellhausen added to the passages questioned by Duhm; and Cheyne, in the Introduction to W. R. Smith's *The Prophets of Israel,* rejected altogether about twenty verses; this number he increased to over thirty in his more recent article "Amos" in the *Encyclopædia Biblica.* The reasons advanced are largely theological, as in the case of i, 2; ii, 4, 5; iv, 13; v, 8, 9; ix, 5, 6, 8-15, and historical, as in connection with i, 6-12; vi, 2. Abruptness in transition is also argued against some passages, and, as in the case of Hosea, some consider all references to Judah out of place in a message to the northern kingdom. Of the most widely known recent writers on Amos, Driver, after examining carefully the objections urged against ii, 4, 5; iv, 13; v, 8, 9; ix, 5, 6, 8-15, reaches the conclusion that in no case are the arguments convincing. G. A. Smith rejects ix, 8-15, and he suspects the passages questioned by Duhm as well as i, 11, 12; v, 14, 15; vi, 2; viii, 13. Taylor (Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible,* article "Amos") declares, "There is good reason for thinking that the following passages are later additions: i, 1, 2; ii, 4, 5; iv, 13; v, 8, 9; vi, 2; ix, 5, 8-15." Nowack rejects i, 11, 12; ii, 4, 5, 15b, 16a; iii, 14b; iv, 12b, 13; v, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15, 26; vi, 2, 9, 10; vii, 1b; viii, 6, 8, 11, 12; ix, 5, 6, 8-15. Marti, who questions more passages than any other writer, rejects (1) all references to Judah (ii, 4, 5; iii, 1b; vi, 1, in part); (2) certain historical additions (i, 6-12; ii, 10, 12; v, 25, 26; vi, 2); (3) theological glosses (i, 2; iii, 7; iv, 13; v, 8, 9, 13; viii, 8, 11-14; ix, 5, 6); (4) the Messianic promise (ix, 8-15); (5) some expressions and phrases of minor im-

portance (for example, in iii, 3; iv, 7). President Harper, in the most recent commentary on Amos, considers as secondary i, 1, 2, 9, 10, 11, 12; ii, 4, 5, 12; iv, 7b, 8a, 13a, d; v, 8, 9, 18b, 22b; vi, 2, 9-11a; vii, 1d, 8a; viii, 2a, 6, 11a; ix, 5, 6, 8c, 9-15.

The objections raised against some of these passages seem so inconclusive and far-fetched that they require no refutation. Others receive due consideration in the comments. There are a few passages, however, that are rejected with such unanimity that they deserve more extended discussion. These passages are, i, 6-12; ii, 4, 5; iv, 13; v, 8, 9; ix, 5, 6; and ix, 8-15.

1. Chapter ix, 8-15, is a picture of the glories of the Messianic age. Its authenticity has been questioned as persistently as that of any portion of Amos. The objections are due, in part at least, to the assumption widely held at the present time, though without good reason, that the preëxilic period was without Messianic hopes. "In the exile, therefore, we must locate the beginnings of what we may call the Messianic hope" (H. P. Smith, *Old Testament History*, p. 338). For a discussion of this point the reader may turn to the introductory remarks on Hos. ii, 14-23, and Introduction, pp. 35, 36; also Amos v, 15. In this connection are to be considered only the specific objections raised against the authenticity of the verses. (1) The *linguistic* argument may be omitted since the data are not sufficiently numerous or clear to be decisive (compare Introduction to Joel, p. 137). (2) The second objection may be stated as follows: The sentiment of ix, 8-15, is foreign to Amos; everywhere else he predicts utter destruction, here a bright future; such abrupt change would weaken the rest of his message. "Such hopes," it is said, "would be natural and legitimate to people who were long separated from their devastated land, and whose punishment and penitence were accomplished, but are they natural to a prophet like Amos?" In reply it may be said: (a) The promises contained in ix, 8-15, are not for all. This the first hearers must have under-

stood as readily as the unbiased modern reader can see it. Chapter ix, 8-10, states positively that only a remnant shall be saved, while "the sinners of my people shall die by the sword." A promise following a statement of this kind cannot be understood as intended for all. But if intended only for the faithful, how can it weaken Amos's message of judgment? Must it not rather prove an encouragement to the faithful and an incentive to some of the "sinners" to cast their lot with the righteous? (b) It is not true that Amos holds out no hope anywhere else. In v, 15, he speaks of the possibility that a remnant may be preserved. True, v, 15, is rejected by some, but on insufficient grounds, the chief reason being that its testimony is troublesome. But even if v, 15, is omitted the testimony of vii, 2, 5, remains. (c) Chapter ix, 7, cannot be the conclusion of the book or of a discourse. Harper retains 8a, and this provides a suitable close; but it does not follow that 8b-15 is not a part of the original; it provides an even more appropriate conclusion of the book. The subject resolves itself into the more general question whether or not all Messianic predictions are later attempts to modify the severity of the earlier prophets. Proofs to sustain this position are still wanting. (3) A third objection is based upon the expressions in verse 11, which seem to presuppose that the awful calamity has already fallen. But, it is said, there is nothing in the history of Israel before the time of Amos that could be described in such extravagant language; only the exile satisfies the language; hence the expressions must come from the exilic or postexilic period. Is this conclusion warranted? True, the English reads "is fallen," making the *fall* a thing of the past, but the Hebrew has the participle, which leaves it undecided whether the event lies in the past, or in the present, or in the future. As a result there is no reason why the expressions of verse 11 should not be interpreted as referring to a *future* overthrow of the dynasty of David. That Amos expected a great calamity to fall upon Judah is clear from ii, 4, 5; on the other hand, in view of his lofty concep-

tion of the character of Jehovah it seems incredible that he should rest satisfied with announcing judgment without a ray of hope for anyone. Other prophets did not do it. It is certainly worthy of note that Jeremiah and Ezekiel, whose denunciations were as severe as those of Amos, and whose conviction that Judah and Jerusalem would fall was unwavering, should draw, while the destruction of the city was still future, the brightest pictures of the restoration. But even in the days of Amos the dynasty of David had lost much of its splendor. Well might the prophet wish for a restoration "as in the days of old." The division subsequent to the death of Solomon had robbed Judah and the dynasty of David of much prestige and power and was greatly deplored by Isaiah (vii, 17); again, only about a generation before Amos, Judah had suffered great humiliation (2 Kings xiv, 13, 14). In view of these facts the testimony of ix, 11, cannot be regarded as conclusive. (4) A further objection claims that a promise made to Judah exclusively has no place in a prophetic book intended for Israel. This objection rests upon a misapprehension. The promise is not for Judah exclusively, but for the "kernel" preserved out of "the sinful kingdom," Israel. All that can be said is that the exaltation is connected with the dynasty of David; but this is an essential element of the Messianic hope from the time of David.

There may still be room for uncertainty, but the objections cannot be considered conclusive. Some of the chief difficulties would vanish completely if we could assume that these verses were not a part of the message as spoken at Beth-el, but that they were added when Amos put his prophecies into writing and prepared them for a wider circle.

2. Amos iv, 13; v, 8, 9; ix, 5, 6, are similar in character and import and may be considered together. The objections raised against the authenticity of these verses are: (1) Lack of connection with their contexts. Chapter iv, 12, it is said, forms a natural conclusion; verse 13 adds nothing to the utterance. Closer study, however, shows that verse 13 is by

no means without significance. If it does nothing else, it serves to secure a reverent hearing for the prophetic message (see in loco). At any rate, the fact that a passage may be omitted without disturbing the context is not sufficient reason for denying its originality. The same may be said of ix, 5, 6. With v, 8, 9, the situation is different, for there the thought of the prophet seems interrupted, though this is denied by Mitchell. May not in this case the difficulty be due to a disarrangement of the text? (See in loco.) (2) A second objection is that "such ejaculations in praise of Jehovah's creative power are not elsewhere met with in Hebrew prophecy before the time of the exile." That similar ejaculations become more frequent in the exilic and postexilic period must be admitted (Isa. xl, 22; xlii, 5; xliv, 24; Job ix, 8, 9, etc.), but is this sufficient reason for denying the verses to Amos? It cannot be denied that the passages are in the style and spirit of Amos. Is it unthinkable that a prophet whose heart was deeply moved should burst forth in sublime doxologies? Certainly they serve an important purpose (see in loco). W. R. Smith finds no difficulty in accepting the passages as coming from Amos. "That such an appeal takes an ejaculatory form is not surprising under the general conditions of prophetic oratory, and in each case the appeal comes in to relieve the strain of intense feeling at a critical point in the argument." Even a keen critic like Kuenen sees no reason for denying the verses to Amos. (3) G. A. Smith states an additional objection, which to him seems the strongest, in the words: "*Jehovah is his name* (which occurs in two passages) or *Jehovah of hosts is his name* (which occurs in at least one) is a construction which does not happen elsewhere in the book, except in a verse where it is awkward, and where we have already seen reason to doubt its genuineness (v, 27). But still more, the phrase does not occur in any other prophet, till we come down to the oracles which compose Isa. xl—lxvi." (In Jeremiah, where the expression occurs eight times, he thinks it due to later interpolations.) When we compare these phrases with

other similar divine titles in the Book of Amos (see pp. 206f.) the weakness of this objection becomes apparent. Later writers who reject the passages have added no new arguments to substantiate their position. In view of this inconclusiveness of the arguments it may be safer to heed the cautious remark of G. A. Smith: "At the same time, a case which has failed to convince critics like Robertson Smith and Kuenen cannot be considered conclusive, and we are so ignorant of the conditions of prophetic oratory at this period that dogmatism is impossible."

3. To show the inconclusiveness of the case against ii, 4, 5, it is only necessary to state the objections. The most complete summary of these is found in Harper: (1) The similarity in form puts the section into the same category with i, 9, 10, and i, 11, 12, and any doubt which attaches to these oracles must attach also to this. (2) The introduction of this oracle removes entirely the force of the surprise which the Israelites would have felt. (3) It is impossible to suppose that Amos would have treated Judah so cursorily, and in a manner so like that in which he treated other nations. (4) The terms of Judah's sin are of a Deuteronomic character and of later origin. (5) The style is tame, vague, and weak. (6) The term *Israel* in ii, 6-16, includes Judah (ii, 10). (7) The concluding formula "saith Jehovah" is lacking. (8) The sin described as transgression of the "instruction" and the "statutes" of Jehovah was too indefinite, not so flagrant as to call for its introduction in this place; in fact, unlike any charges made elsewhere by Amos, and out of harmony with the formula "for . . . transgressions," since it could not be specified as one of the three or four.

A few brief remarks on these objections must suffice: (1) The first objection is better discussed in connection with i, 6-12. (2) The verses make a very appropriate transition from the surrounding nations to Israel. (3) There was no more need for dealing with Judah at length than in the case of the surrounding nations, since Amos was sent to Israel

(vii, 15); on the other hand, it would be strange if a citizen of the south had been completely silent concerning his home. (4) The resemblance with Deuteronomy is not very close. A comparison with Isa. v, 24, and Exod. xviii, 16, both older than the now generally received date of Deuteronomy, shows the weakness of the objection. (5) Objections (5) and (8) belong together. That the indictment is indefinite is true; but why should it be made definite? It was specific enough to serve the prophet's purpose, which seems to have been to make specific charges only against Israel. (6) Does *Israel* in ii, 10, or anywhere else in ii, 6-16, include Judah? How else could the prophet have expressed himself conveniently, had he desired to confine himself to the northern kingdom? (7) Were this a later insertion, it is almost beyond doubt that an imitator would have added the closing formula. The omission may be due to a copyist.

4. Chapter i, 6-12. Several recent writers agree in rejecting i, 9-12; to these verses Marti adds i, 6-8. Wellhausen, one of the first to question i, 9, 10, advanced three reasons: (1) The indictment against Tyre is the same as that against Gaza. (2) Nothing is said concerning the other Phœnician cities. (3) The closing formula "saith Jehovah" is absent. Later writers have added two further objections: (4) The metrical structure is different from that of the preceding oracles. (5) If the geographical order prevailed as elsewhere from north to south verses 9, 10 would have to precede 6-8. Against i, 11, 12, Wellhausen urged: (1) It is strange that Amos says nothing about Sela, the capital of Edom, while mentioning Bozrah and Teman. The latter take the place of the former only in exilic and postexilic literature. (2) In the time of Amos Israel had no ground for complaint against Edom; the latter had suffered more from the former than Israel from Edom. A change came at the time of the exile. (3) The description of Edom's crime is more vague than in the undoubted sections. To these objections Harper adds (4) the similarity of structure when compared with i, 9, 10; ii, 4, 5.

Marti is the only commentator to reject i, 6-8. (Cheyne, in *Critica Biblica,* rejects verse 8, because it is out of harmony with his *Yerachmeelite* theory.) The chief objection urged by Marti is the non-mention of Gath among the cities of the Philistines, which silence, he thinks, presupposes the destruction of Gath; but since this city was not destroyed until 711 (see in loco), i, 6-8, cannot be earlier than 711, which is subsequent to the death of Amos. The similarity of i, 6-10, with Joel iii, 4-6, leads him to believe that the verses in Amos are dependent on Joel; consequently he makes the Amos passage even later than Joel, whom he dates about 400 B. C. He concludes: "The word against the Philistines is, therefore, a product of the activity of the scribes . . . of a later century. Amos, as a true prophet, was represented as having foreseen, like Ezekiel (xxv, 15-17), the fate of the Philistines, whose realization was expected at that time as a preparation for the dawn of the Messianic age."

In reply to Marti it may be said that the dependence of the Amos passage upon Joel is by no means certain (see Joel, p. 136), and that the silence concerning Gath may be explained satisfactorily without assuming its destruction (see on i, 8). Some of the objections against the other verses (i, 9-12) are based upon unwarranted assumptions. (1) Why must Amos express all his denunciations in the same metrical form? Dissimilarity can be made a ground for rejection only on the basis of an unproved theory of the metrical structure of the prophetic books (see on Hosea, pp. 36, 37). (2) How can we know that Amos intended to follow the geographical order? (3) Must Amos use in every case the closing formula "saith Jehovah"? (4) The indictment against Tyre is not *identical* with that against Gaza. Why may not the two have been guilty of similar crimes? (5) In no case does the prophet mention *all* the cities of a land; only the more prominent are mentioned in each case. Tyre being the most prominent city in Phœnicia, its mention was sufficient. In Moab Kerioth alone is named; in Ammon, Rabbah. (6) If a prophet

desired to describe the hostility between Edom and Israel during the greater part of their history rather than a specific outbreak of this hostility, could he have used more appropriate language than that of i, 11? That Edom's attitude at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem would justify the condemnation of verse 11 (compare Obad. 10-14; Psa. cxxxvii, 7) more than any other known manifestation of Edom's hatred may be readily admitted; but it must always be borne in mind that we are not in possession of complete historical records concerning the relations between Israel and Edom. Nevertheless, there is enough said and implied in the Old Testament to indicate that at no time—even when temporarily united against the same foes—the feeling between Israel and Edom was very cordial. It is equally certain that the fault was not always with Israel (compare Num. xx, 14-21; 2 Kings viii, 20-22). (7) The only objection remaining is the mention of Bozrah and Teman instead of Sela. There is no reason for thinking that Sela was ever superseded by Bozrah or Teman as the capital of Edom; but if at a later period Bozrah and Teman might be mentioned as representative cities of Edom, in the place of the capital, why not at an earlier period? Besides, Sela is mentioned but rarely in the prophetic writings, if at all (Isa. xvi, 1; xlii, 11); Cheyne considers the word always a common noun, and goes so far as to say that no city bearing the name of Sela is mentioned in the Old Testament. If this is true the objection vanishes; whether it is true or not, Sela may have been selected as the capital because of its location (Obad. 3), though Edom had other more prominent cities.

In conclusion, it may be said that the question of integrity is one of evidence. The possibility of later insertions cannot be denied; but it is too much to say that the arguments advanced against the authenticity of any portion of Amos are conclusive. Later investigation may increase their force and add to their number, but at present there is still room for difference of opinion even among scholars.

AMOS.

CHAPTER I.

THE words of Amos, [a]who was among the herdmen of [b]Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel [c]in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of [d]Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel, two years before the [e]earthquake.

[a] Chap. 7. 14.— [b] 2 Sam. 14. 2; 2 Chron. 20. 20.

[c] Hos. 1. 1.—[d] Chap. 7. 10.——.[e] Zech. 14. 5.

CHAPTER I.

The Prologue—The Approaching Judgment, chaps. 1, 2.

Substance and form combine to prove that chapters i and ii constitute one connected whole. Following the title (i, 1) and the preface (i, 2) comes a preparatory section (i, 3–ii, 5), leading up to the central thought, the condemnation of Israel (ii, 6–16). Every listener would give his assent that the surrounding non-Israelitish nations, Damascus (i, 3–5), Philistia (i, 6–8), Phœnicia (i, 9, 10), Edom (i, 11, 12), Ammon (i, 13–15), and Moab (ii, 1–3), were deserving the wrath of Jehovah; they would even agree that Judah, since the division more or less hostile to the north, merited punishment (ii, 4, 5). Hence these denunciations would awaken a ready response and win the good will of the prophet's hearers. Having accomplished this, he burst forth in ii, 6–16, in the message for which he had been preparing the way, denunciation and judgment upon Israel. By their silent consent to the condemnation of the other nations they had pronounced the sentence of doom upon themselves.

It is to be noted that Amos is not partial to Israel; he does not condemn the surrounding nations exclusively for sins committed against Israel, but for sins against commonly recognized principles of humaneness and morality (ii, 1). The guilt of Israel is greater because of its special privileges. Even in this section Amos emphasizes the two central truths of his theology, that Jehovah is God over all, and that he governs all in righteousness.

1. *Title.* Each prophetic book has a title, sometimes brief (Obad. 1), sometimes running through several verses (Jer. i, 1ff.). This title indicates the name, home, occupation, and approximate date of the author, and the nation in whose interest he prophesied. **Words of Amos**—Of the other prophetic books only Jeremiah contains a similar expression, "words of Jeremiah," that is, the prophecies are assigned primarily to their human author; everywhere else it is stated or implied that the primary author is God: "The word of Jehovah" (Hos. i, 1; Joel i, 1, etc.); "The vision of Isaiah" (i, 1; compare Obad. 1; Nah. i, 1), granted by Jehovah; "The burden" (Hab. i, 1; compare Nah. i, 1; Mal. i, 1), imposed by Jehovah. It does not follow, however, that the utterances of Amos and Jeremiah are less divine than those of the other prophets (compare Jer. i, 2, "to whom the word of Jehovah came"; Amos i, 1, "which he saw"; i, 3, "Thus saith Jehovah," compare vii, 14). A rabbinical tradition says that the peculiarity is due to and is a rebuke of the fault-finding spirit of Amos and Jeremiah. **Herdmen**—Literally, *nakad-keepers* (see p.192). **Tekoa**—See p. 191. **Israel**—The northern kingdom, to which Amos was sent (vii, 15). **He saw**—See on Hab. i, 1. On the chronological data see pp. 195f. The relative clause "who was among the

2 And he said, The LORD will [f]roar from Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the habitations of the shepherds shall mourn, and the top of [g]Carmel shall wither. 3 Thus saith the LORD; For three transgres-

[f] Jer. 25. 30; Joel 3. 16.

[g] 1 Sam. 25. 2; Isa. 33. 9.

herdmen (of Tekoa)" is thought by some to be a later, though historically reliable, addition.

2. *Preface.* A verse by itself, containing a general announcement of judgment. It is but loosely connected with its context; hence it has been claimed that Amos borrowed it from Joel. This cannot be, since Joel is later than Amos. The more recent commentators regard the verse a late interpolation in Amos, dependent on Joel iii, 16. Proof of this is lacking; it is equally possible that the passage in Joel is dependent on Amos, especially since the thought of the former is an expansion and exaggeration of that of the latter. Harper advances six reasons against the authenticity of the verse, but not one of them carries conviction. As a preparation for the more detailed delineation of judgment, which is the substance of the book, the verse is not inappropriate. A Judæan prophet would naturally consider Zion the center of Jehovah's activity; Carmel, which feels the heaviest blow, is a locality in the north, whither Amos was sent. **Roar**—The figure is that of a lion roaring as he leaps upon his prey; therefore a herald of imminent destruction. **Utter his voice**—Thunder (Psa. xviii, 13; xlvi, 6, etc.), proclaiming the breaking forth of a destructive tempest. Both phrases express the idea of God's manifestation in awful judgment (compare Jer. xxv, 30). **Zion . . . Jerusalem**—The earthly habitation of Jehovah, from which his manifestations proceed.

2b calls attention to the consequences of the divine manifestation. **Habitations**—R. V., "pastures" (Joel ii, 22; Psa. xxiii, 2). A pastoral term, equivalent to *homestead*, including both land and dwellings. **Mourn**—Partly in consternation (viii, 8; ix, 5) when they hear the roar of Jehovah, partly in grief over the destruction wrought and impending. **Top of Carmel**—In Hebrew with the article, "the Carmel," that is, "the garden land." A mountain ridge in Israel, about twelve miles long, varying in height from five hundred to eighteen hundred feet, running from southeast to northwest, and projecting into the Mediterranean. It is famous because of the events described in 1 Kings xviii. Its name was given to it on account of its beauty and fertility (ix, 3), which in a measure it still retains. Its top is filled with luxuriant growth of every kind. **Wither**—Or, *dry up.* No more vivid picture of destruction could be painted (Isa. xxxiii, 9; Nah. i, 4). "As the blood runs cold through terror, so Amos pictures the sap of the plants and trees as ceasing to flow when Jehovah's thunder is heard pealing over the land" (compare Joel iii, 16).

3–5. *The sin and punishment of Damascus.* **Thus saith Jehovah**—A solemn formula repeated before each denunciation (i, 6, 9, 11, 13; ii, 1, 4, 6). The prophet desires to make it plain that in all he says he is the spokesman of Jehovah (compare Zech. i, 3). **Three . . . four**—There is no reason for thinking that Amos had in mind three or four specific transgressions which exhausted the patience of Jehovah, as Kimchi undertook to show: (1) the campaign against Baasha (1 Kings xv, 18ff.), (2) against Ahab (1 Kings xx, 1ff.), (3) against Jehoahaz (2 Kings xiii, 3), (4) against Ahaz of Judah (2 Kings xvi, 5, 6). The last one took place about twenty-five years after this prophecy was delivered. The numbers must be explained as *ascending enumeration* (see on Hos. vi, 2); the prophet wants to say that the measure of their guilt is more than full. **Transgressions**—More correctly, *rebellions.* **Damascus**—The

sions of [h]Damascus, [1]and for four, I will not [2]turn away *the punishment* thereof; [i]because they have threshed Gilead with threshing instruments of iron: 4 [k]But I will send a fire into the house of Hazael, which shall

[h] Isa. 8. 4; 17. 1; Jer. 49. 23; Zech. 9. 1. —[1] Or, *yea, for four.*—[2] Or, *convert it,* or *let it be quiet;* and so verse 6, etc.—[i] 2 Kings 10. 33; 13. 7.—[k] Verses 7, 10, 12; Jer. 17. 27; 49. 27; chap. 2. 2, 5.

capital of Syria, here representing the whole country. The beginnings of the hostility between Israel and Syria may be traced to the days of Solomon, when Rezon established himself in Damascus and became "an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon" (1 Kings xi, 23–25). The Syrian power increased steadily, until in the ninth century B. C. Syria became the most powerful nation in western Asia and seriously troubled Israel. In Amos's days its prestige had begun to decline, Jeroboam II having waged successful war against Damascus (2 Kings xiv, 25, 26; compare xiii, 25). **I will not turn away the punishment thereof**—Literally, *I will not turn it back.* The object must be supplied from the context. Since it is left so indefinite there has been great difference of opinion with regard to it. The more important interpretations are, "I will not *convert* it," that is, Damascus; "I will not *revoke* it," that is, the wrath of Jehovah, or the resulting sentence of judgment, or a threat uttered at an earlier period and now recalled by Amos. The English translation gives a correct interpretation by adding "punishment." **Because**—Introduces a typical example of the transgressions of Damascus. **Threshed**—Literally, *tread down.* One primitive method of threshing was to make animals tread out the grain with their feet (Mic. iv, 13; Deut. xxv, 4). Even when other methods of threshing were adopted the term was retained. **With threshing instruments of iron**—The threshing machines to which reference is here made are described by Thomson in *The Land and the Book,* ii, p. 315, as follows: "The most common mode of threshing is with the ordinary slab, called *mowrej,* which is drawn over the floor by a horse or yoke of oxen, until not only the grain is shelled out, but the straw itself is ground up into chaff. To facilitate this operation bits of rough lava (or iron teeth, Isa. xli, 15, 16) are fastened into the bottom of the *mowrej,* and the driver sits or stands upon it. . . . The Egyptian *mowrej* is a little different from this, having rollers which revolve on the grain, and the driver has a seat upon it. . . . In the plains of Hamath I saw this machine improved by having circular saws attached to the rollers." Whether the prophet means that the Syrians actually used these instruments to torture captives, or whether he simply uses the expressions to give a vivid description of cruelties of every sort is not certain (compare 2 Kings xiii, 7; Prov. xx, 26). **Gilead**—In the narrow sense, the east Jordan territory between the Yarmuk and the Arnon (Deut. iii, 13), in the broader sense, the whole Hebrew territory east of the Jordan; so here, equivalent to "inhabitants of Gilead." Gilead, being nearest to Syria, would suffer first in the case of a Syrian invasion. The prophet may have in mind the invasion under Hazael during the latter half of the ninth century (compare 2 Kings viii–xiii).

4, 5. Jehovah cannot endure the perpetration of such cruelties. The form which the announcement of judgment takes is practically the same in each case (i, 7, 10, 12, 14; ii, 2, 5; compare Hos. viii, 14). **Fire**—Symbol of war and its horrors. **House of Hazael**—Not "dynasty," but "palace" or "city" or "land" of Hazael (compare Hos. viii, 1; ix, 15). Hazael usurped the throne of Damascus about 843 B. C. (2 Kings viii, 7ff.); he was the contemporary of Kings Joram, Jehu, and Jehoahaz, and inflicted heavy defeats upon all three. Since he was the founder of

devour the palaces of Ben-hadad.
5 I will break also the [1]bar of Damascus, and cut off the inhabitant from [3]the plain of Aven, and him that holdeth the scepter from [4]the house of Eden: and [m]the people of Syria shall go into captivity [n]unto Kir, saith the LORD.

[1] Jer. 51. 30; Lam. 2. 9.—[3] Or, *Bikath-aven.*

[4] Or, *Betheden.*—[m] Fulfilled, 2 Kings 16. 9.—[n] Chap. 9. 7.

the then ruling dynasty, Amos calls Syria "the house of Hazael," just as Israel is called in Assyrian inscriptions "the house of Omri." **Ben-hadad**—Three kings of Damascus by that name are definitely known, two preceding Hazael, the third his son and successor (2 Kings xiii, 3, 25). The allusion may be to the third, who in time was nearest to Amos, though it is not likely that he was then on the throne. However, it is not impossible that the reigning monarch bore the same name. Some suggest that Hazael and Ben-hadad are mentioned simply as typical, representative names of Syrian kings without reference to any particular monarch; still others think that Ben-hadad (that is, the son of the deity Hadad) was a title of the Syrian kings as Pharaoh was of the Egyptian rulers. **Bar**—The bar of iron or bronze used to fasten the gates of ancient cities; here a symbol of defense in general. No human defenses can stand against the wrath of Jehovah. **Inhabitant**—R. V. margin, "him that sitteth on the throne" (Isa. x, 3)—the ruler; which is preferable, in view of the parallel, "him that holdeth the scepter"—the reigning monarch (Judg. v, 14). The rulers will be smitten; only in the last clause of verse 5 is the fate of the people indicated. **The plain** ["valley"] **of Aven**—R. V. margin, "of Vanity," or Idolatry. LXX. reads "On" for "Aven," which presupposes a different vocalization of the same Hebrew consonants. This reading, indecisive though it may be in view of the LXX. rendering of the same word in Hos. iv, 15; v, 8; x, 5, 8, pointed the way to the now almost universally accepted explanation. The word translated "valley" is used even to-day as a proper noun, denoting the valley between the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon (Josh. xi, 17), in Arabic *el-Buḳā'a.* In this valley, about sixty miles north-northeast of Dan, are located the ruins of Baalbek, the ancient Heliopolis, formerly, as its name indicates, a center of sun worship. According to two ancient authorities, Macrobius and Lucian, sun worship was introduced in the Syrian Heliopolis from Heliopolis in Egypt. The Egyptian name of Heliopolis in Egypt is *Aunû*, Heb. *Ôn* (Gen. xli, 45, 50; xlvi, 20). This name may have been brought, with the sun worship, from Egypt to Syria, and at one time Heliopolis in Syria may have been known as On. If this is the correct interpretation, instead of "valley of Aven" we should read *Buḳā'a-Ôn*, or "valley of On," the valley around the city On. Intentionally the word was changed by Amos or a later copyist into "vanity" to express contempt for the worship practiced there. **The house of Eden**—Margin, "Beth-eden," making the two words the name of a locality. A village *Edhen* is located about twenty miles northwest of Baalbek, which may have served as a summer residence to the Syrian kings. Though the place mentioned by Amos has often been identified with this village, it is more likely that he has in mind a district mentioned frequently in the Assyrian inscriptions and called *Bit-adini.* This district is about two hundred miles north-northeast of Damascus on both sides of the Euphrates (2 Kings xix, 12; Ezek. xxvii, 23), and may have been at one time a vassal state of Damascus. If this is the correct interpretation, the prophet says that the chief ruler in Damascus as well as the vassal princes will be smitten by the divine judgment, while the people will be carried into exile. **Kir**—Amos ix, 7, makes Kir the original

6 Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of [o]Gaza, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because they [5]carried away captive the whole captivity, [p]to deliver *them* up to Edom: 7 [q]But I will send a fire on the wall of Gaza, which shall devour the palaces thereof: 8 And I will cut off the inhabitant [r]from Ashdod, and him that holdeth the scepter from Ashkelon, and I will [s]turn mine hand

[o] 2 Chron. 28. 18; Isa. 14. 29; Jer. 47. 4, 5; Ezek. 25. 15; Zeph. 2. 4.——[5] Or, *carried them away with an entire captivity*, 2 Chron. 21. 16, 17; Joel 3. 6.——[p] Verse 9.——[q] Jer. 47. 1.——[r] Zeph. 2, 4; Zech. 9. 5, 6.——[s] Psa. 81. 14.

home of the Syrians. According to 2 Kings xvi, 9, the prediction was fulfilled in less than a generation; but it is to be noted that LXX. in the passage in Kings omits "Kir." Tiglath-pileser III states that he took Damascus (in 732), and that he carried a large proportion of its inhabitants into exile, but the place of exile is omitted. Kir is mentioned again in Isa. xxii, 6. Concerning its location opinions vary. It has been identified most commonly with a district of Armenia, near the river Kur, which flows into the Caspian Sea; but this district does not appear to have been a part of Assyria in the days of Tiglath-pileser. At least ten other identifications have been proposed, not one of which can be considered entirely satisfactory.

Amos does not state by whom he expected the judgment to be executed; nevertheless, it is very probable that he was thinking of the Assyrians, the most powerful nation in his day. As a matter of history, after several unsuccessful attempts the Assyrians, under Tiglath-pileser, finally did overthrow the Syrian power in 732, captured Damascus, put to death King Rezin, and carried thousands of its inhabitants into exile.

6–8. *The sin and punishment of Philistia.* **Three . . . four**—See on verse 3. **Gaza**—The southernmost city of Philistia and splendidly located for trade; about fifty miles southwest of Jerusalem, and three miles from the sea. Being just on the edge of the desert, it became a commercial center, commanding the caravan routes to Syria, to Egypt, and to Arabia. Its present population is said to number about eighteen thousand. Here the city represents the whole of Philistia; it is possible, however, that Gaza was most guilty; its location would naturally make it the center of slave trade with Edom. **The whole captivity**—R. V., "the whole people"; literally, *an entire captivity.* The meaning is that they spared neither sex nor age; they took the entire population of the places attacked. The reference is probably not to a national invasion (2 Chron. xxi, 16, 17), but to raids undertaken for the specific purpose of securing slaves. **Deliver them up to Edom**—The Edomites probably resold the slaves. The same charge is brought against Tyre (verse 9), and a similar charge against both in Joel iii, 4–6. It is not stated here that the communities attacked were Hebrew. On *Edom* see verse 11. **Fire**—As in verse 4. **Inhabitant**—See on verse 5. **Ashdod**—About twenty-one miles north-northeast of Gaza, about three miles from the seacoast, a strong fortress on the caravan route from Gaza to Joppa. It suffered from an Egyptian siege about 650 B. C., but recovered and was a place of importance at the time of Nehemiah; now a small village called Esdûd. **Holdeth the scepter**—The chief cities of the Philistines each had its own king (see below and on Joel iii, 4). **Ashkelon**—Was located on the seacoast, about halfway between Gaza and Ashdod; it is mentioned on the *Tel-el-Amarna* tablets (about 1400 B. C.), now an insignificant place called *Askelan.* **Turn mine hand against**—As long as God leaves man to himself his hand is said to rest; *to turn his hand* is to take an active interest in man's affairs, either to save or to punish (Isa. i, 25; Zech.

against Ekron: and [t]the remnant of the Philistines shall perish, saith the Lord GOD.

9 Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of [u]Tyrus, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; [x]because they delivered up the whole captivity to Edom, and remembered not [6]the brotherly covenant: **10** [y]But I will

[t] Jer. 47. 4; Ezek. 25. 16.—[u] Isa. 23. 1; Jer. 47. 4; Ezek. 26; 27; 28; Joel 3. 4, 5.—[x] Verse 6.

[6] Heb. *the covenant of brethren,* 2 Sam., 4. 11; 1 Kings 5. 1; 9. 11–14.—[y] Verses 5, 7 etc.

xiii, 7); here to punish. **Ekron**—An inland city, about twelve miles northeast of Ashdod, and nearer to the territory of Judah than any of the other cities; it was the seat of an oracle (2 Kings i, 2), but otherwise it is of little importance in the Old Testament; now *Akîr,* on the railway from Joppa to Jerusalem. **The remnant**—All in the districts enumerated who escape the destruction announced and the inhabitants of the parts of Philistia not included in the four districts mentioned. Philistia was divided into five city states, independent in times of peace, usually united in times of war; four of these centers are named here. Why not the fifth, Gath? If it was still prominent in Amos's day it must be included in *the remnant;* there certainly was no reason why Amos must mention it by name; and the omission does not prove, as some think, that the city was already destroyed (2 Kings xii, 17; see further on vi, 2).

The four cities mentioned suffered severely from the Assyrians subsequent to the delivery of this threat. Gaza was attacked by Tiglath-pileser in 734 and was compelled to pay a heavy tribute. Ashdod refused in 711 to pay tribute imposed at an earlier date; in punishment the city was reduced and its inhabitants exiled. In 701 both Ashkelon and Ekron joined in the revolt against Sennacherib and were severely dealt with. However, all four cities seem to have become again more or less powerful; all are named as tributaries to the later Assyrian kings, Esar-haddon and Ashurbanapal (compare Neh. iv, 7; xiii, 23, 24; Zech. ix, 5–7). **Saith the Lord Jehovah**—A reiteration, for the sake of emphasis, of the truth that Amos was commissioned by Jehovah to deliver this message. *The Lord Jehovah* is a favorite expression in Amos and Ezekiel; it is used rarely in the other prophetic books. *Lord* calls attention to Jehovah's supremacy. On the authenticity of this oracle see pp. 221 f.

9, 10. *The sin and punishment of Phœnicia.* **Tyrus** ["Tyre"]—The most important of the cities of Phœnicia, representing here the entire nation (see on Joel iii, 4; Zech. ix, 2). The crime condemned is similar to that of Philistia. **They delivered up the whole captivity** ["people"]—See on verse 6. If the last clause of verse 9 is a condemnation of a second crime, independent of the slave trade, it may be correct to say that "the Phœnicians are not charged with *taking* captives, as are the Philistines (verse 6), but with *delivering* them, that is, acting as agents for those who actually took them." However, the last clause of verse 9 may be a circumstantial clause, "without remembering the brotherly covenant." If so, the two are brought into closer relation, and the crime condemned is most probably the taking and selling of slaves in violation of some sacred agreement. **The brotherly covenant**—Literally, and margin, "the covenant of brethren." This is commonly interpreted of the covenant between Solomon and Hiram of Tyre (1 Kings v, 1ff.; compare ix, 13). Against this interpretation Driver urges with some justice, "It is scarcely likely that the crowning offense of Tyre should be forgetfulness of a treaty entered into nearly three hundred years previously." If the two clauses are connected, the breaking of the covenant and the taking or delivering of slaves sustain some relation to each other;

send a fire on the wall of Tyrus, which shall devour the palaces thereof.

11 Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of [z]Edom, and for four, I will not turn away *the*

[z] Isa. 21. 11; 34. 5; Jer. 49. 8, etc.; Ezek. 25. 12, 13, 14; 35. 2, etc.; Joel 3. 19; Obad. 1, etc.; Mal. 1. 4.

when the slave raids were undertaken the breaking of a covenant was involved. It is nowhere stated that the slaves were Hebrews, or that the covenant was a covenant with Israel. Chapter ii, 1, makes it certain that Amos's denunciations were not limited to sins against the chosen nation. Hence it is not unreasonable to suppose that the slaves were taken from other Phœnician or from Canaanitish communities with which the Tyrians sustained treaty relations, the breaking of which constituted the breach of the "brotherly covenant." Tyre, being a commercial city, would find it advantageous to maintain friendly relations with its neighbors, which might be sealed by treaties, as in the case of Israel. For selfish purposes these sacred treaties were broken, and this treachery called forth the severe denunciation of the prophet. It is mere assumption to say that the covenant between Hiram and Solomon "had an especial provision against selling them (that is, captured Jews) away from their own land."

Other prophets agree with Amos in foretelling the doom of Tyre (Isa. xxiii; Jer. xxv, 22; Ezek. xxvi–xxviii; Joel iii, 4; Zech. ix, 3, 4); but it was a long time before the ruin of Tyre was accomplished. The Tyrian policy, to purchase peace by the payment of heavy tribute rather than to encounter the Assyrian armies, postponed the disaster for centuries. This policy had its origin even before the time of Amos. Ashur-naṣir-pal of Assyria (885–860) received tribute from Tyre and other Phœnician cities. Shalmaneser II (in 842, 839) and Tiglath-pileser III (in 734) also received tribute. Shalmaneser IV is said to have attacked the city; he was defeated on sea and a siege from the land side, after having been maintained for five years, had to be raised. Sennacherib and Esar-haddon appear to have been no more successful; but in 664 Ashur-banapal took the city by storm. It soon regained its prestige, and at a later time Nebuchadnezzar besieged the city; the siege continued for thirteen years, and its outcome is in doubt (Ezek. xxix, 18). The heaviest blow fell in 332, when, after a siege of seven months, the city fell before Alexander the Great. In the taking of the city six thousand are said to have perished by the sword, two thousand to have been crucified, and thirty thousand women, children, and slaves to have been sold. It recovered rapidly and played an important role until 1291 A. D., when it fell permanently into the hands of the Saracens. Now its site is covered by an insignificant Arab village. "After having been the mother of colonies and the mistress of the seas, bearing her merchandise into otherwise unvisited lands and adjusting the supply and demand of the world, Tyre is now content, at the close of her career, to be a stagnant village in stagnant Turkey." On the authenticity of this oracle see pp. 220 ff.

11, 12. *The sin and punishment of Edom.* Edom—The Edomite territory was located south and southeast of the Dead Sea and east of the Arabah, the deep depression connecting the southern end of the Dead Sea with the Gulf of Akabah (see on vi, 14). During the exile the Edomites (Idumæans) crossed this depression and settled in southern Judah. Edom was not as fertile as Palestine or Moab, though it is described as possessing, in the days of Moses, fields, vineyards, wells, and a highway (Num. xx, 17–19). With the exception of a few places the land was not suitable

punishment thereof; because he did pursue [a]his brother [b]with the sword, and [7]did cast off all pity, [c]and his anger did tear perpetually, and he kept his wrath for ever: **12** But [d]I will send a fire upon Teman, which shall devour the palaces of Bozrah.

[a] Gen. 27. 41; Deut. 23. 7; Mal. 1. 2. —[b] 2 Chron. 28. 17.

[7] Heb. *corrupted his compassions.*— [c] Ezek. 35. 5.—[d] Obad. 9, 10.

for agriculture, and it yielded scarcely enough for the keeping of flocks. As a result the Edomites became desert robbers, forcing a living from the caravans passing through their territory and from the neighboring more fertile regions. They were the dread of the Hebrews during the desert wanderings (Num. xx, 14ff.) and during a large part of their national history. **His brother**—Israel (see on Obad. 10). **Pursue . . . with the sword**—An apt characterization of the relation between Israel and Edom throughout their entire history (Num. xx; Obad. 10–14; Psa. cxxxvii, 7; compare Joel iii, 19; Mal. i, 2–5). This hostility merited the greater condemnation because the two nations were related so intimately. It is not necessary to suppose that the prophet had in mind any specific outbreak, though analogy with the other denunciations would point in that direction. A revolt against Judah is mentioned in 2 Kings viii, 20–22; but others, unrecorded in the Old Testament, may have been undertaken against Israel. **Cast off all pity**—Margin, "corrupted his compassions." Other translations are unnatural and need not be mentioned. *Corrupt* is used in the sense of *suppress*, or *stifle*, the natural instinct of compassion which may be expected to exist between brothers. **His anger did tear perpetually**—Or, *in his anger he did tear perpetually;* that is, his anger did not exhaust itself in one outbreak (Job xvi, 9; Psa. vii, 2). Peshitto and Vulgate favor an emendation which gives a smoother parallelism, and is accepted by most modern scholars, "and he cherished his anger perpetually" (Jer. iii, 5; compare Nah. i, 2; Psa. ciii, 9). **Kept his wrath forever**—Time was not allowed to dissipate it; carefully it was nursed. Such conduct calls for judgment.

Teman—Mentioned again in Jer. xlix, 7; Obad. 9; Job ii, 11, etc. According to Eusebius and Jerome, Teman was a district of Edom, but also a village about fifteen miles from the capital, Petra. The direction from Petra is not certain; in Ezek. xxv, 13, however, it is mentioned as being in the opposite direction from Dedan; the latter was in the southeast; Teman, therefore, must have been in the northwest or north or northeast. Since no walls are mentioned (compare i, 7, 10, 14, etc.), it is thought that the reference here is to the district. **Bozrah**—Named again in Gen. xxxvi, 33; Jer. xlix, 13, etc.; not the city bearing the same name mentioned in Jer. xlviii, 24. It is identified with the modern *el-Busaireh*, a small village surrounded by extensive ruins, about thirty-five miles north of Petra and about twenty miles southeast of the Dead Sea. The capital of Edom in Amos's day was Sela, the later Petra (see on Obad. 3).

The fulfillment of this oracle also may be traced in part in the later history of Edom. With other states in western Asia, Edom paid homage to Tiglath-pileser III, after having paid tribute to an earlier king, Adad-nirari III (about 800 B. C.). Of later kings Sennacherib, Esar-haddon, and Ashur-banapal enumerate the Edomites among their vassals; evidently they were never able, though they made frequent attempts, to free themselves from the Assyrians, while the prestige of the latter endured. Edom became a part of Nebuchadnezzar's domain (Jer. xxvii, 3, 4). During the exile the Edomites crossed the Arabah and settled in southern Judah. At the time of Malachi Edom seems to have been desolate (i, 3, 4); and toward the close of the fourth century B. C. Arabian tribes established themselves per-

13 Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of [e]the children of Ammon, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because they have [8] [f]ripped up the women with child of Gilead, [g]that they might enlarge their border: 14 But I will kindle a fire in the wall of [h]Rabbah, and it shall devour the palaces thereof, [i]with shouting in the day of battle, with a tempest in the day of the whirlwind: 15 And [k]their king shall go into captivity, he and his princes together, saith the LORD.

[e] Jer. 49. 1, 2; Ezek. 25. 2; Zeph. 2. 9.—[8] Or, *divided the mountains.*—[f] Hos. 13. 16.—[g] Jer. 49. 1.

[h] Deut. 3. 11; 2 Sam. 12. 26; Jer. 49. 2; Ezek. 25. 5.—[i] Chap. 2. 2.—[k] Jer. 49. 3.

manently in the territory of Edom. After the Mohammedan conquests the Edomite cities disappeared entirely. On the authenticity of this oracle see pp. 220ff.

13–15. *The sin and punishment of Ammon.* **Children of Ammon**—Ammonites (compare "Children of Israel"—Israelites). The Ammonites, like the Moabites and Edomites, were closely related to the Hebrews. Their territory was east of the Jordan, north-northeast of Moab. The more desirable districts along the river were occupied in the earlier days by the Amorites and later by the Hebrews; as a result the Ammonites had to be content with the less desirable districts bordering on the desert. Consequently they were dependent upon their flocks, and never passed over entirely to an agricultural life. They possessed few large cities, and as a people they stood midway between the wandering Arab tribes of the desert and the settled agricultural peoples of Palestine. **Gilead**—Immediately west of Ammon (see on verse 3). **Ripped up the women with child**—The Ammonites came frequently into hostile contact with the Hebrews (Judg. xi, 32; 1 Sam. xi, 11; 2 Sam. xii, 31). After the division Ammon became tributary to Israel, but remained so only a little while. To the very end it manifested a spirit of hostility (2 Kings xxiv, 2; Jer. xl, 14; Neh. ii, 10). From the definiteness of the accusation it may be inferred that the prophet has in mind a particular event, though it is impossible to identify it with certainty; some connect it with the invasion of Israel by Hazael (2 Kings xiii, 3; compare viii, 12). That the Ammonites were capable of the most inhuman practices is seen from 1 Sam. xi, 2. The special form of cruelty condemned was not unknown in ancient times, even in Israel (2 Kings xv, 16; Hos. xiii, 6; compare Nah. iii, 10; Isa. xiii, 16). It is frequently spoken of in Arabic literature in connection with intertribal border warfare. **Enlarge their border**—The cruelties could not be excused on the ground of self-defense; they were practiced in the pursuit of a policy of conquest. **Kindle**—In all the other passages "send." **Rabbah**—The capital of Ammon (Ezek. xxv, 5; Deut. iii, 11), and the only city of the Ammonites mentioned in the Old Testament. It is situated at the head of the Jabbok, about twenty-five miles northeast of the Dead Sea. By Ptolemy Philadelphus (about 250 B. C.) its name was changed to Philadelphia; its ruins now bear the name *Ammān.* **Shouting**—Not the cry of despair of the defeated Ammonites, but the joyful shouts of the victorious conquerors (Josh. vi, 5; Jer. iv, 19, etc.). **Tempest . . . whirlwind**—A figurative description of the onward sweep of the hostile armies; nothing can withstand. King and princes will be carried into exile. **Their king . . . his princes**—On the latter see Hos. iii, 4. The reading "his princes," analogy with the other oracles (ii, 3), the absence of all reference to idolatry in the preceding denunciations, and the LXX. and Targum favor the present Hebrew reading, "their king"; on the other hand, in Jer. xlix, 3, which seems to be dependent upon this passage, Vulgate and Peshitto read in the place of

CHAPTER II.

THUS saith the LORD; For three transgressions of [a]Moab, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because he [b]burned the bones of the king of Edom into lime: 2 But I will send a fire upon Moab, and it shall devour

[a] Isa. 15, 16; Jer. 48; Ezek. 25. 8; Zeph. 2.8.

[b] 2 Kings 3. 27.

"their king," "Milcom," which is the name of the national deity of Ammon (1 Kings xi, 5, 33). If the same reading is adopted here, as is done by some, *his princes* becomes equivalent to *his* (Milcom's) *priests*. In Jeremiah, where "his priests" is added, Milcom (R. V., "Malcam") is probably correct; here the present Hebrew text is preferable.

The later history of Ammon is shrouded in obscurity; hence it is not easy to trace the fulfillment of this oracle. From the time of Tiglath-pileser III the Ammonites are mentioned in inscriptions as paying tribute to the Assyrian kings. Jeremiah prophesied against them (xlix, 1–6; compare also Ezek. xxv, 1–7). In the time of Nehemiah they were still hostile to the Jews (ii, 19); and even at a later period they are spoken of as enemies of the Jews (1 Macc. v, 30–43). Justin Martyr speaks of them as still numerous, but Origen states that they had become merged into the Arab tribes.

CHAPTER II.

1–3. *The sin and punishment of Moab.* Moab—The third nation east of the Jordan closely related to the Hebrews (i, 11, 13). The territory of the Moabites was to the south of Ammon, on the uplands east of the Dead Sea. It was well adapted to agriculture, for it contained many broad valleys and well-watered fields. As a result the Moabites became at a very early period a settled people with large cities. War was waged between Israel and Moab from an early time (Judg. iii, 16; 1. Sam. xiv, 47; 2 Sam. viii, 2; but compare Ruth i, 4; 1 Sam. xxii, 3). After the division Moab seems to have secured its independence, for Omri was compelled to conquer it (2 Kings iii, 4; compare Moabite Stone, ll. 4, 5). Subsequently King Mesha revolted and secured his independence (2 Kings iii, 5ff.; compare Moabite Stone, ll. 5ff.), which was never again lost to Israel.

Burned the bones of the king of Edom into lime—The exact nature of this crime is uncertain. Was the king burned alive, or after he had died but before he had been buried, or was his body taken from the tomb and burned? To burn the king alive would be extreme cruelty, but to prevent proper burial by burning a corpse or to desecrate a tomb by removing the corpse would also be considered a heinous crime; for, according to ancient Semitic conception, the departed who received no proper burial (Jer. xxxvi, 30) or whose resting place was disturbed found no rest in Sheol. Many sepulchral inscriptions contain awful curses upon disturbers of the resting places of the departed. Eshmunazar of Sidon, for example, prays that he who desecrates his tomb "may have no root beneath, or fruit above, or any beauty among the living under the sun." Amos' sentiments are not due to any heathenish superstition; he is aroused by the spirit of hatred and vindictiveness that manifests itself in the crime. The fact that Moab is condemned not for sins committed against Israel but against the very enemies of the Hebrews is another indication of the high ethical standards of Amos.

Of the crime mentioned nothing is known otherwise; it may have been committed after the joint attack upon Moab by Judah, Israel, and Edom (about 850 B. C.). According to 2 Kings iii, 26, the king of Moab seems to have harbored special hatred against the king of Edom. Perhaps he was unable to avenge himself while the king was alive, and therefore pursued him even after death. Fire—As

the palaces of [c]Kirioth: and Moab shall die with tumult, [d]with shouting, *and* with the sound of the trumpet: 3 And I will cut off [e]the judge from the midst thereof, and will slay all the princes thereof with him, saith the LORD.

[c] Jer. 48. 41.—[d] Chap. 1. 14.—[e] Num. 24. 17; Jer. 48. 7.—[f] Lev. 26. 14, 15; Neh. 1. 7; Dan. 9. 11.

4 Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; [f]because they have despised the law of the LORD, and have not kept his commandments, and [g]their lies caused them to err, [h]after

[g] Isa. 28. 15; Jer. 16. 19, 20; Rom. 1. 25.—[h] Ezek. 20. 13, 16, 18, 24, 30.

in i, 4. **Kirioth**—R. V., "Kerioth." Since it represents the whole country, it must have been a city of prominence. It is mentioned again in Jer. xlviii, 41, and on the Moabite Stone, l. 13. Its location is not certain. Some identify it with *Kir* (or *Ar*) of Moab (Isa. xv, 1), chiefly because of the similarity of the names and the fact that wherever Ar or Kir is mentioned no mention is made of Kirioth. Another name for the same locality is thought to be *Kir-hareseth* or *Kir-heres* (Isa. xvi, 7, 11). This, on the testimony of the Targum, is identified with the modern *Kerak*, about eleven miles east of the southern bay of the Dead Sea, eighteen miles south of the Arnon. Others think that Kerioth may be identified with the modern *Ḳureiyat*, north of the Arnon, which it has been customary to identify with the ancient Kiriathaim. **With tumult**—The noise and confusion of battle. Jeremiah calls the Moabites "sons of tumult" (xlviii, 45; compare Num. xxiv, 17) There is no warrant for Hoffmann's suggestion that the Hebrew translated "tumult" is the name of the acropolis of Ar, and that the preposition should be rendered "in," the name of the acropolis being used instead of the name of the city, as Zion is used sometimes in the place of Jerusalem. **With shouting**—See on i, 14. **Sound of the trumpet**—Or, *horn* (see on Hos. v, 8). The sound is the signal to advance. **Judge**—Since Moab was governed by kings, the use of *judge* has been explained by assuming that Moab at the time of Amos had no independent king, that *judge* is equivalent to *governor* or *viceroy*, and that Jeroboam II had deposed the king and placed a governor upon the throne of Moab. However, 2 Kings xiv, 25, is not a sufficient basis for this assumption; the verse does not prove even that Moab was subject to Jeroboam (see on vi, 14); besides, Mesha, who was a vassal of Omri, is called "king" (2 Kings iii, 4). It is better to interpret *judge* as equivalent to *king* (compare Mic. v, 1). The title is appropriate since one of the chief functions of the ancient king was the administration of justice (2 Sam. viii, 15; xv, 2; 1 Kings vii, 7, etc.).

When this prophecy found its fulfillment it is impossible to say. The kings of Moab are mentioned as tributaries in the Assyrian inscriptions from the time of Tiglath-pileser III onward. Isa. xv, xvi; Jer. xlviii; Ezek. xxv contain announcements of judgment and disaster upon Moab (compare also Zeph. ii, 8–10).

4, 5. *The sin and punishment of Judah.* **Judah**—The southern kingdom, the home of Amos, in distinction from the northern kingdom, against which Amos prophesied. The other nations had sinned against Jehovah without external law (Rom. ii, 12); Judah had received a law, therefore its guilt was greater. **Law of Jehovah**—See on Hos. iv, 6. **Despised** ["rejected"]—As authoritative (Hos. viii, 12); they refused to obey it and to be guided by it. **Commandments** ["statutes"]—Literally, *the things engraven*, that is, on public tablets. The word is found frequently in Deuteronomy (iv, 5, 8, 14; v, 1, 31, etc.) and designates enactments of a moral, religious, or civil character. As the next clause indicates, here it refers primarily to statutes enjoining loyalty to Jehovah. **Lies**—The worthless idols that have

the which their fathers have walked:
5 [i]But I will send a fire upon Judah,
and it shall devour the palaces of
Jerusalem.

[i] Jer. 17. 27; Hos. 8. 14.

6 Thus saith the LORD; For three
transgressions of Israel, and for
four, I will not turn away *the pun-*
ishment thereof; because [k]they sold

[k] Isa. 29. 21; chap. 8. 6.

no existence, and whose imagined power and ability to help are not real (Isa. lxvi, 3; Jer. v, 7; Lev. xix, 4, etc.). The fathers put their trust in these; the children followed in the footsteps of their ancestors. The history of Judah presents numerous illustrations of this apostasy. True, there were some kings who remained more or less loyal to Jehovah (1 Kings xv, 11; xxii, 43; 2 Kings xii, 2, 3; xiv, 3), but there were others who looked with favor upon idolatry (1 Kings xv, 3; 2 Kings viii, 18, 27; xi, 1). Amos himself says little concerning religious conditions in Judah, but there can be no doubt that even in his day idolatry was prevalent there (compare Isa. ii, 8). Utter destruction of the state and of Jerusalem, the political and religious center, will be the punishment.

A partial fulfillment of Amos's threat took place when Sennacherib overran Judah and besieged Jerusalem (2 Kings xviii, 3ff.; Isa. xxxvi, 1ff.). At that time Jerusalem escaped, but fire did "devour the palaces of Jerusalem" when in 586 B. C. the city was taken and destroyed by the armies of Nebuchadnezzar. After the restoration it was rebuilt, and the city has had a continuous history since. Its present population is said to be about fifty thousand.

The Sin and Punishment of Israel, 6–16.

The denunciations in i, 3–ii, 5, are preparatory to ii, 6–16, which is the thesis of the entire book. Chapters iiff. are an elaboration of this thesis. If other nations, less favored than Israel, are to be punished for their sins, can Israel, with its superior privileges and advantages, hope to escape judgment? The prophet begins his accusation in the same stereotyped form, but he departs from it after the first verse. He opens with the presentation of the indictment (6–8), containing two counts: (1) oppression of the poor, (2) immorality and inordinate self-indulgence practiced in the name of religion. With this conduct he contrasts the divine care for Israel and condemns the base ingratitude of the corrupt nation (9–12). He closes with an announcement of the speedy destruction of the people (13–16).

6, 7a. Oppression of the poor. **Sold the righteous for silver**—This accusation is commonly interpreted as a separate count in the indictment, maladministration of justice. It is thought to refer to the acceptance of bribes on the part of the judges, for which they pronounce guilty the innocent and cause him to be sold into slavery. The next clause, "the poor for a pair of shoes," is said to mark an advanced degree of corruption, when the judges do the same "for a pair of shoes" (see below). Others interpret the second clause as referring to the oppression of poor debtors by rich creditors; the latter sell the former into slavery, though the indebtedness involved may be insignificant. The latter interpretation of "(they sold) the poor for a pair of shoes" is to be preferred (viii, 6; but compare v, 12; Isa. i, 23; iii, 14, 15); and it seems best to interpret the first clause also of the oppression of the poor by rich creditors rather than of maladministration of justice. **They**—The wealthy and powerful creditors. **Sold**—That is, into slavery. In a figurative sense the verb may be used of less severe treatment. **Righteous**—Not in an ethical but in a forensic sense—innocent; those who have come into the control of their creditors without any fault of their

the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes; 7 That pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor, and [1]turn aside the way of

[1] Isa. 10. 2; chap. 5. 12.——[m] Ezek. 22. 11.

the meek: [m]and a man and his father will go in unto the *same* [1]maid, [n]to profane my holy name: 8 And they lay *themselves* down upon clothes

[1] Or, *young woman.*——[n] Lev. 20. 3; Ezek. 36. 20; Rom. 2. 24.

own. **Silver**—The money for which they are said to be indebted. **Poor**—R. V., "needy." Those who are unable to meet their obligations and have no one to take their part. **For a pair of shoes**—A proverbial expression for something of little value; equivalent to the modern "for a song." "One of the commonest crimes of Amos's day was that of land-grabbing on the part of the rich (Isa. v, 8), and it is this that Amos is here denouncing."

The greed of the rich is further described in 7a, in Hebrew in the form of a participial clause, reproduced in English by a relative clause, connected with "they" of verse 6. **Pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor**—A peculiar expression. If the text is correct, a twofold interpretation is possible. With both, "dust on the head" is a sign of distress and mourning (2 Sam. i, 2; xv, 32; Lam. ii, 10). The meaning, then, may be either that they are "so avaricious that they begrudge the poor even the little dust used as a token of mourning," or, that they are so heartless that they yearn to see the poor reduced to a state of misery and distress in which they will sprinkle the dust upon their heads. Jerome reads a different, though similar, verb, "to crush" for "to pant," and omits the preposition before "the head." He reads, "who crush upon the dust of the earth the head of the poor," which gives excellent sense, and is accepted by many as original. With this forceful figure of extreme cruelty may be compared Isa. iii, 15, "grind the faces of the poor," and Mic. iii, 2, 3, "strip the flesh off their bones." Other emendations suggested are less probable. **Meek**—Simple-minded, God-fearing persons, who harm no one and who do not know the craftiness and deceitfulness of this world, to guard against it. **Turn aside the way**—They place obstacles in the way of the meek; thus they prevent the carrying out of their plans and purposes, and throw them into difficulties where they become an easy prey.

7b. Immoralities. **A man and his father will go in unto the same maid**—The addition of *same*, which is not in the original, is based upon a misapprehension. The emphasis is not upon the fact that the father and the son go in to the *same* girl, but upon the universality of the immoral practices. The article is used in a generic sense, to indicate that the maiden alluded to is a member of a well-known class (G.-K., 126g). In English the indefinite article may be used. The allusion is to the sacred prostitutes at the shrines of Ashtoreth, who were found even in those Hebrew sanctuaries where, nominally at least, Jehovah was worshiped (see on Hos. iv, 13). *A man and his father*—father and son; the practice is universal; there is no attempt to conceal it. **To profane my holy name**—A final clause, "in order to." The Israelites should have known better (verse 11), and Amos assumes that they did know better; therefore he represents the practice of these immoralities as deliberate premeditated acts in defiance of the well-known will of God, by which acts discredit and dishonor were brought purposely upon the *name* of Jehovah, that is, upon his character; for "God's *name* is equivalent to the sum of his attributes as revealed to his chosen people" (Isa. lvii, 15; Psa. cxi, 9; see on Mic. v, 4). On *profane* see on Joel ii, 17.

The immoralities condemned in 7b are those practiced in the name of religion; the excesses condemned in

[o]laid to pledge [p]by every altar, and they drink the wine of [2]the condemned *in* the house of their god.

9 Yet destroyed I the [q]Amorite before them, [r]whose height *was* like the height of the cedars, and he *was* strong as the oaks; yet I [s]destroyed his fruit from above, and his roots

[o] Exod. 22. 26.—[p] Ezek. 23. 41; 1 Cor. 8. 10; 10. 21.—[2] Or, *such as have fined*, or, *mulcted*.

[q] Num. 21. 24; Deut. 2. 31; Josh. 24. 8.—[r] Num. 13. 28, 32, 33.—[s] Isa. 5. 24; Mal. 4. 1.

verse 8 also are connected with the religious cult, though "clothes taken in pledge" goes back to the first count in the indictment. **Lay themselves down . . . by** ["beside"] **every altar**—In drunken carousal (8b). There may be an allusion to the practice condemned in 7b. **Clothes laid to** ["taken in"] **pledge**—The term used denotes the *outer garment*, a large square cloth with a hood, thrown over the body and held together from the inside. To the poor people this garment served also as a covering at night, and since the nights are at times very cool it is indispensable. Sometimes the garment was given in pledge, but the humane law in Exod. xxii, 26, demands its return to the owner at sundown. This law the unrighteous nobles neglected to observe in their mad desire to satisfy their lusts. **They drink the wine**—At feasts connected with the *peace* and *thank* offerings (v, 23; Exod. xxxii, 6, etc.); these feasts had become occasions of revelry and debauchery. **Of the condemned**—Better R. V., "such as have been fined." The wine was purchased with money received from fines; whether just or unjust Amos does not say; that in many cases they were unjust there can be no doubt. **The house of their god**—R. V., "God." It is also possible to render "gods" or even "the houses of their gods." The Hebrew is ambiguous. To Amos the chief earthly dwelling place of Jehovah was Jerusalem (i, 2). Whether he considered all local sanctuaries illegitimate and the worship practiced there idolatry is not certain. At any rate, he evidently has in mind here the practices at such sanctuaries as Beth-el, Gilgal (iv, 4), and Beer-sheba (viii, 14); that he thinks of more than one place is indicated also by "beside *every* altar."

9–12. What contrast between the actual conduct of the people and the conduct that might be expected of them in view of Jehovah's loving care for them throughout their entire history! He brought them out of Egypt and led them in the wilderness (10); he destroyed the Amorites (9); he raised up religious teachers (11, 12). In the present Hebrew text the chronological order of events is not observed; chronologically the verses should be arranged 10, 9, 11, 12, and this Harper thinks to have been the original order.

Yet destroyed I—The contrast is brought out more emphatically in the Hebrew, "But I (on my part), I destroyed." **Amorite**—In verse 10 Palestine is called "the land of the Amorite," an expression found also in early Babylonian inscriptions. In the Old Testament *Amorite* is used (1) as synonymous with *Canaanite*, to designate the inhabitants of the whole of Palestine (Josh. xxiv, 8, 15, 18; Deut. i, 7, 19, etc.); (2) to designate the peoples ruled by Sihon and Og, east of the Jordan (Num. xxi, 21–25). As verse 10 makes plain, here the reference is to the inhabitants of the entire land. **Cedars**—Among the Hebrews the "type of loftiness and grandeur" (Isa. ii, 13; compare i, 30, 31). **Oaks**—The type of strength and endurance (Isa. ii, 13; compare i, 30, 31; Zech. xi, 2). For the belief that the inhabitants of Palestine were of giant stature see Deut. i, 28; Num. xiii, 32, 33. **Fruit . . . roots**—The highest and the lowest parts, equivalent to *root and branch*—completely. A similar expression is read on the sarcophagus of Eshmunazar (see on verse 1; compare Hos. ix, 16; Isa. v,

from beneath. **10** Also [t]I brought you up from the land of Egypt, and [u]led you forty years through the wilderness, to possess the land of the Amorite. **11** And I raised up of your sons for prophets, and of your young men for [x]Nazarites. *Is it* not even thus, O ye children of Israel? saith the LORD. **12** But ye gave the Nazarites wine to drink; and commanded the prophets, [y]saying, Prophesy not. **13** [z]Behold, [3]I am pressed under you, as a cart is pressed *that is* full of sheaves.

[t] Exod. 12. 51; Mic. 6. 4.—[u] Deut. 2. 7; 8. 2.—[x] Num. 6. 2; Judg. 13. 5.—[y] Isa. 30. 10; Jer. 11. 21; chap. 7. 12, 13; Mic. 2. 6.—[z] Isa. 1.14—[3] Or, *I will press your place, as a cart full of sheaves presseth.*

24). **Also I**—The pronoun is again emphatic. **Brought you up**—*Up*, because of the mountainous character of Palestine as compared with Egypt. **From the land of Egypt**—The Exodus from Egypt was the supreme manifestation of Jehovah's love and power in Hebrew history; hence it is frequently made the basis of prophetic appeals (iii, 1; Hos. xii, 9; xiii, 4, etc.). **Forty years through the wilderness**—Lovingly and tenderly he cared for them and supplied their wants (v, 25; Deut. ii, 7; viii, 2; xxix, 5); his ultimate purpose being to bring them into the promised land.

Jehovah raised up among them religious and moral teachers, which was a special mark of divine favor, enjoyed by Israel exclusively. **Prophets, . . . Nazarites** ["Nazirites"]—Two classes of religious teachers and workers; the former taught principally, though not exclusively, by word of mouth, the latter by example. Both played important parts. From the beginning of Hebrew history to its close no serious crisis arose without God raising up a prophet to lead the people through it. The Nazirites (*separated*, or, *consecrated*) tried to stem by example the tide of worldliness and self-indulgence, which threatened to sweep away the simplicity of ancient Hebrew life. (See articles "Prophecy and Prophets" and "Nazirites," in Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible*.) The law regulating the conduct of Nazirites is found in Num. vi, 1–21 (compare Jer. xxxv). **Is it not even thus**—An appeal to confirm or deny the preceding statements. Denial was impossible. **Saith Jehovah**—This particular expression is very common in prophetic writings; it is a solemn asseverative interjection (see on Joel ii, 12); and by calling attention to the fact that the prophet is delivering the word of Jehovah it sets a seal of truthfulness upon the message.

The Israelites failed to appreciate the divine goodness; not only did they refuse to listen, they even sought to silence the prophets and compel the Nazirites to become unfaithful to their vows; by these acts they insulted Jehovah himself. **Gave . . . wine to drink**—One of the principal obligations of the Nazirites was to abstain from intoxicating drinks (Num. vi, 3). **Prophesy not**—Such prohibitions are not infrequent (1 Kings xiii, 4; xviii, 4; xix, 2; xxii, 8, 26, 27; 2 Kings i, 9ff.; vi, 31); for the time of Amos and later see vii, 13, 16; Hos. ix, 8; Isa. xxx, 10, 11; Mic. ii, 6; Jer. xx, 7–10.

13–16. *The punishment.* Righteous retribution will overtake the sinful nation. Verse 13 is rendered more acceptably in the R. V., "Behold, I will press you in your place, as a cart presseth that is full of sheaves." **Behold I will**—The Hebrew construction implies the imminence of the judgment; better, "Behold, I am about to" (G.-K., 116p). **Press you in your place**—The meaning of the verb, which occurs only here in the Old Testament, is doubtful. The cognate verb in Arabic means "to hinder," "to cause to stop"; hence, "I will cause a stop under you." If this meaning is accepted, the form of the second verb demands the translation "as a cart causes a stop." This is strange, since we would expect "as

14 [a]Therefore the flight shall perish from the swift, and the strong shall not strengthen his force, [b]neither shall the mighty deliver [4]himself: 15 Neither shall he stand that handleth the bow; and *he that is* swift of foot shall not deliver *himself*: [c]neither shall he that rideth the horse deliver himself. 16 And *he that is* [5]courageous among the mighty shall flee away naked in that day, saith the LORD.

[a] Jer. 9.23; chap. 9. 1, etc.—[b] Psa. 33. 16.

[4] Heb. *his soul*, or, *life*.—[c] Psa. 33. 17—[5] Heb. *strong of his heart*.

a cart is caused to stop." Others—so R. V.—connect the verb with the Aramaic and read, "I will *press* you in your place"; literally, *I will press under you*, which is thought to mean that he will hold them fast in their place, so that they cannot escape. This also is not without difficulties. (1) "I will press *you* in your place" would be quite satisfactory, but "I will press *under you*," the literal rendering, is not so intelligible; and in the second clause, "as a cart is pressed," would give good sense, not so "as a cart presseth." (2) The presence of an Aramaic word in Hebrew at the time of Amos is peculiar. (3) Verse 14 implies flight, though the fugitives will be overtaken; nothing is said there about inability to move. For these reasons most commentators accept the emendation of Hitzig, who reads verse 13, "Behold, I am about to cause it to totter under you, even as a wagon totters that is full of sheaves"; that is, the ground will totter under them—a figure of approaching ruin.

14–16. The swiftest and best-equipped warriors cannot escape. **Therefore**—R. V., better, "and." **Flight**—Rather the place of flight or of refuge. **Shall perish**—Better, R. V. margin, "shall fail." **Swift**—He would be expected to be the first to reach a place of safety; but when the divine blow falls the qualities ordinarily of the greatest advantage will profit nothing. **Shall not strengthen his force**—The strong man will be so terrified that he cannot collect his strength or make use of it. **Mighty**—The warrior, whose bravery might be expected to save him, cannot save *his life* (margin). **Handleth the bow**—The armed man. **Shall he stand**—Stop in his flight (Nah. ii, 8). The swiftness of man (2 Sam. i, 23; ii, 18) or of horse shall avail nothing. **Courageous**—Literally, *the strong in his heart* (Psa. xxvii, 14; xxxi, 24). **Naked**—He will throw away everything that might hinder his flight—weapons, armor, and superfluous clothing. **In that day**—The day of judgment. **Saith Jehovah**—As in verse 11.

The judgments announced in chapters i, ii are expected by the prophet to take the form of foreign invasions and war. In no case does he call the executioner by name; but it is beyond doubt that throughout he is thinking of the Assyrians, who, beginning with the reign of Ashur-nasir-pal (885–860 B. C.), became an ever-increasing menace to all the nations enumerated. Why Amos does not call them by name is not quite clear. It may be because in his days the Assyrian power was on the decline—it revived under Tiglath-pileser III (745–727 B. C.)—and therefore the mention of their name would have added no force to his message, but, on the contrary, might have weakened it. It is worthy of note, however, that neither Isaiah nor Jeremiah mention the national enemies by name in their earlier discourses. Wellhausen is undoubtedly right when he calls Amos "the leader of the prophetic choir of the Assyrian period."

CHAPTER III.

Discourses of Warning and Exhortation, iii, 1–vi, 14.

Chapters iii–vi form the main part of the Book of Amos. It consists of several discourses, in which the indictment and sentence of ii, 6–16, are expanded and justified. Most

CHAPTER III.

HEAR this word that the LORD hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying, 2 [a]You only have I known of all the families of the earth: [b]therefore I will [1]punish

[a] Deut. 7. 6; 10. 15; Psa. 147. 19, 20.—[b] See Dan. 9. 12; Matt. 11. 22; Luke 12. 47; Rom. 2. 9; 1 Pet. 4. 17.—[1] Heb. *visit upon.*

commentators divide the chapters into three discourses, new starts being made with iii, 1; iv, 1; v, 1. The advantage of this division is that each section begins with the solemn summons, "Hear ye." Nevertheless, it seems more accurate to distinguish four, or even five, discourses, beginning with iii, 1; iv, 4; v, 1; v, 18; vi, 1.

ADDRESS INTENDED PRIMARILY FOR THE RULING CLASSES iii, 1–iv, 3.

Two fundamental religious misapprehensions of the common people were (1) that Jehovah was interested solely in the affairs of Israel, (2) that he was arbitrary in his dealings with men, especially in his dealings with Israel as compared with his treatment of other nations. Amos sets himself to rectify these misconceptions. He makes the attempt in chapters i and ii by showing that Jehovah's rule extends over all nations. In iii, 1, 2, he repeats the attempt in a more startling manner. That Jehovah had *known* Israel in a special sense Amos does not question, but he does deny that the special care of Jehovah for the nation in the past is a guarantee of the continuation of the divine favor or of the nation's safety irrespective of their present life and conduct. The prophet points out briefly that the popular belief is unwarranted, that the inferences drawn from the divine choice are false, that this choice brought to Israel certain privileges, and that these privileges involved special obligations. Since they failed to meet these obligations the fact of their divine choice only increased their guilt, and now makes inevitable their punishment by a righteous God.

This new and startling announcement would arouse derision and opposition. To ward off these the prophet proceeds to point out that, strange as the declaration may seem, it is of Jehovah (3–8). In 9ff. he calls upon the surrounding nations to testify against Israel. The privileges of Israel were superior to those of other nations, nevertheless their crimes are so heinous that they startle even heathen nations (9, 10). This condition of affairs makes judgment inevitable (11–15). A special judgment will fall upon the luxury-loving and self-indulgent ladies of the capital, who are in part responsible for the prevailing corruption (iv, 1–3).

1, 2. *Failure to recognize responsibilities brings judgment.* If ii, 6–16, is called the thesis of the Book of Amos, iii, 1, 2, may properly be called the thesis of chapters iii—vi, for the four chapters are entirely given up to an expansion of the truth that the failure of Israel to recognize its obligations makes inevitable its doom.

Hear this word—A solemn summons to pay strictest attention to the words of the prophet, for he is about to utter a divinely given message. **The whole family**—Both Israel and Judah, though Amos deals chiefly with Israel. *Family*—nation (compare verse 2; Mic. ii, 3). **Brought up**—See on ii, 10. **Have I known**—And know still (G.-K., 106g). On the significance of *know* see on Hos. viii, 4; here the word is used in a favorable sense, including choice and continuous care (Hos. xiii, 5; Isa. i, 2; v, 1–7; Jer. iii, 1). In a qualified sense Jehovah *knew* all the nations of the earth (ix, 7; compare i, 3—ii, 5). To this assertion of Amos the people would readily assent, but the inference drawn by the prophet would bring a surprise; they would have continued, "therefore he will always be on our side." How different the prophet's inference! **Therefore**—Because I have

you for all your iniquities. 3 Can two walk together, except they be agreed? 4 Will a lion roar in the forest, when he hath no prey? will a young lion [2]cry out of his den, if he have taken nothing? 5 Can a bird fall in a snare upon the earth, where no gin *is* for him? shall *one*

[2] Heb. *give forth his voice.*

chosen and blessed you (compare ii, 9ff.). **Punish**—"To whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required. The greater the measure of grace, the greater also is the punishment, if it is neglected or despised" (compare Jer. vii, 3–15). **All**—No excuses will be countenanced, no mercy shown.

3–8. *The prophet's authority.* Amos anticipated the startling effect of his message. Many would consider him a madman, and pay no attention to his words, unless he could convince them that they were indeed a message from Jehovah. This he attempts to do in iii, 3–8. By a series of illustrations he points out that every effect presupposes a cause (3–6); on this principle his prophesying presupposes that he is sent by Jehovah, who desires to make known beforehand his purpose (7, 8). The illustrations are taken from everyday life, and their very simplicity would make them impressive. It is gratuitous to call the philosophy underlying some of the illustrations unsound, or to bring forward exceptions which would invalidate the prophet's argument. Neither the prophet nor his hearers were acquainted with the Christian philosophy of the twentieth century; they held the philosophic conceptions implied in the illustrations, and they were concerned with general rules rather than with exceptions; therefore to them the arguments would be convincing.

In spite of all that has been said to the contrary, this interpretation of iii, 3–8, which is accepted by most commentators, seems the most natural; the interpretation revived and defended at length by Harper, which considers 3–8 an announcement of the dissolution of the covenant relation between Jehovah and Israel and of the impending doom, is less probable.

Can ["shall"] **two walk together, except they be** ["have"] **agreed?**—A symbolical or allegorical interpretation, "unless they are of the same mind or opinion," is out of place. Hence it is useless to speculate whether the "two" are Jehovah and the prophet, or Jehovah and Israel, or Jehovah and Assyria, etc. Amos uses a simple illustration, which is to be understood literally. *They be agreed* is literally, *they have pointed out to each other*, that is, they have come to an agreement. The force of the question is, "Do any two men walk together unless they have previously agreed to meet and travel together?" Everyone familiar with conditions in Palestine would see the point. The roads are not always safe. Therefore a man does not travel alone if he can avoid it; but rather than join himself to a stranger or chance acquaintance, who might prove to be a robber, he remains by himself. Consequently, if two men are seen traveling together, the inevitable conclusion is that they have met by previous agreement. G. A. Smith says, "For there (in the wilds of Palestine) men meet and take the same road as seldom as ships at sea." **Lion . . . young lion**—See on Hos. v, 14. **Roar**—The Hebrew has several words to describe the lion's roar. The word used here denotes the roar of the lion as he springs upon the prey (i, 2; Isa. v, 29a; Psa. civ, 21). **Forest**—Or, *jungle.* The roar is an unfailing indication that the lion has found a prey. **Cry out**—Literally, *give forth his voice;* not, as before, the roar with which the lion springs upon his prey, but the "growl of satisfaction" uttered as he devours the prey. When this sound is heard the hearer knows that the prey has been taken. **In a snare upon the earth**—LXX. omits "in a snare," and may be correct. If a bird falls

take up a snare from the earth, and have taken nothing at all? 6 Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people [3]not be afraid? [c]shall there be evil in a city, [4]and the LORD hath not done *it*? 7 Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but [d]he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets. 8 [e]The lion hath roared, who will not fear? the Lord GOD hath spoken, [f]who can but prophesy?

[3] Or, *not run together?*——[c] Isa. 45. 7. ——[4] Or, *and shall not the LORD do* somewhat?

[d] Gen. 6. 13; 18. 17; Psa. 25. 14; John 15. 15.——[e] Chap. 1. 2.——[f] Acts 4. 20; 5. 20, 29; 1 Cor. 9. 16.

upon the ground it proves that a gin or snare has been set for him. If "in a snare" is retained "gin" would better be rendered "bait"; the whole clause, "and there is no bait to it," which is a more literal rendering of the Hebrew. The word does at times designate the instrument with which birds are caught, but in general it means anything that allures to destruction (Exod. xxiii, 33; Deut. vii, 16). **Shall one take up a snare from the earth**—Better, R. V., "shall a snare spring up from the ground." By *snare* is meant a kind of clap net; its workings as described here would point to a trap similar to those used by the ancient Egyptians, which consisted of network spread over two flaps moving on a common axis, to which was attached a spring. The bait was placed upon this spring; when the bait was touched the two sides flew up from the ground and the net enveloped the bird. The springing up of the sides was evidence that something had touched the spring and was now entrapped. **Trumpet**—Or, *horn* (see on Hos. v, 8). The sounding of the horn was the danger signal; everyone knew when he heard it that danger was near, and was terrified. **Evil**—Not moral evil, but calamity or misfortune, such as famine or pestilence. **Jehovah hath not done it?**—The modern Christian may hesitate to say that Jehovah is directly responsible for every calamity and disaster. The ancient Hebrew knew no such hesitation, for he disregarded entirely what we are accustomed to call secondary causes, and ascribed every event, good or bad, the cause of which he could not perceive with his senses, to the direct activity of Jehovah (iv, 4ff.; Isa. vi, 9, 10; 2 Sam. xxiv, 1ff.).

To a pious Hebrew of ordinary intellect the illustrations adduced would be conclusive. The prophet now proceeds to apply the illustrations to the point in hand (8). He prepares the way by a statement of what he considers the general method of divine procedure (7). Jehovah, before undertaking anything, reveals his purpose to the prophet. **The Lord Jehovah**—See on i, 8. **His secret**—His purpose. **His servants**—The prophets are so called because their duty was to carry out the divine commission (1 Kings xviii, 36; 2 Kings ix, 7). Some may be inclined to consider this statement an exaggeration, yet the fact remains that every great crisis in Israel was accompanied by the appearance of one prophet or more (see on ii, 11). Now follows the application. The message of the prophet may seem strange; it is indeed startling, but there is a reason for it. **The lion hath roared**—A figure of Jehovah approaching for judgment (Hos. xiii, 7); he is ready to spring upon his prey; already his terrible roar may be heard (i, 2); it is time to tremble. **Hath spoken**—To reveal his secret (compare verse 7); the prophet is bound to proclaim it.

9, 10. *Summons of the surrounding nations.* Verse 9 connects with verse 2. The prophet, having presented his credentials, continues his message of denunciation and judgment. The iniquities for which judgment is to be executed (verse 2) are so heinous that they startle even the heathen nations. These the prophet summons to testify against Israel. "Even the inhabitants of the great cities of Philistia and

9 Publish in the palaces at Ashdod, and in the palaces in the land of Egypt, and say, Assemble yourselves upon the mountains of Samaria, and behold the great tumults in the midst thereof, and the [5]oppressed in the midst thereof. 10 For they [g]know not to do right, saith the LORD, who store up violence and [6]robbery in their palaces. 11 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; [h]An adversary *there shall be* even round about the land; and he shall bring down thy strength from

[5] Or, *oppressions.*—[g] Jer. 4. 22.—[6] Or, *spoil.*—[h] 2 Kings 17. 3, 6; 18. 9, 10, 11.

Egypt," says Wellhausen, "who were by no means timid and could endure a great deal, would be amazed on seeing the mad confusion and injustice in Samaria." **Publish**—The speaker is Jehovah, or the prophet in his name. No one in particular is addressed; the imperative is equivalent to "Let it be published," by anyone in a position to do so. **In the palaces**—Literally, *upon* or *over* the palaces. Either *from* the high palaces, so that everyone may hear, or let the proclamation be spread *over* the palaces of the nobles. Since the condemnation fell chiefly upon the nobles of Samaria (11–15) it would seem fitting that the sentence should be announced in the presence of their equals. **Ashdod**—LXX., "Assyria." Hosea frequently mentions Assyria and Egypt together, Amos never. Ashdod represents Philistia. Why he mentions Philistia and Egypt rather than other neighboring nations is not clear; perhaps because they, as long-time enemies of Israel, would rejoice most over the downfall of the latter. **Mountains of Samaria**—LXX., "mountain," that is, the mountain upon which Samaria was built (iv, 1; vi, 1), and this is considered by many to be the original, but the present Hebrew text gives good sense. Samaria was situated upon a hill, which was surrounded on all sides by higher hills. From these outer elevations the witnesses were to behold the outrages in Samaria. **Samaria**—Founded as the capital of the northern kingdom by Omri (1 Kings xvi, 24), it remained the capital until the end of the kingdom in 722–721. It continued to exist even after that catastrophe, and Herod the Great, who practically rebuilt the city, called it *Sebaste.* Its site is identified with the modern *es-Sebustieh,* a village and ruin on a hill about six miles northwest of Shechem, in the center of Palestine. **Great tumults**—Confusions and disorders resulting from the violence of the ruling classes. **Oppressed**—Better, R. V., "oppressions" (Job xxxv, 9); *great* is to be supplied (compare ii, 6, 7). 9b may be rendered more forcibly, "And, behold! confusions manifold in the midst of her! oppressions to her very core!" **They know not to do right**—Literally, *straight.* Their sinful conduct has continued so long that their consciences have become seared and all sense of right has been lost; wrongdoing has become their second nature. **Violence and robbery**—That which is secured through violence and robbery. **In their palaces**—From now on it becomes clear whom Amos addresses, the nobles who are robbing their weaker fellow citizens.

11–15. *The sentence.* Jehovah will speedily send an enemy to avenge the wrongdoing; he will lay waste the corrupt city; even the altars of Beth-el will be overthrown. The sentence is introduced by the solemn "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah." **Therefore**—Because of the utter corruption. **An adversary**—A word rendered more often "trouble" or "distress," but "adversary" is most suitable here. **There shall be even round about the land**—This is undoubtedly the sense of the passage, but the Hebrew is awkward. A very slight change, supported by Peshitto, gives "shall surround the land." With the land completely surrounded, every avenue of escape will be cut off. **He shall bring down thy strength**—May be rendered also, "thy strength shall

thee, and thy palaces shall be spoiled. 12 Thus saith the LORD; As the shepherd [7]taketh out of the mouth of the lion two legs, or a piece of an ear; so shall the children of Israel be taken out that dwell in Samaria in the corner of a bed, and [8]in Damascus *in* a couch. 13 Hear ye, and testify in the house of Jacob, saith the Lord GOD, the God of hosts, 14 That in the day that I shall [9]visit the transgressions of Israel upon

[7] Heb. *delivereth.*—[8] Or, *on the bed's feet.*

[9] Or, *punish Israel for.*

be brought down" (G.-K., 144d.) **Strength**—Defenses, that is, the walls and the citadel; they will be torn down. **Thy palaces**—In which the plunder is stored. **Shall be spoiled**—The retribution is according to the *lex talionis.*

Following verse 11 Harper reads verse 15, then 12–14, but there is no necessity for the transposition. 12. The people will be swept away, only a small fraction will escape. **Taketh**—R. V., "rescueth." The Davids who could kill the wild beasts and save the lambs unharmed (1 Sam. xvii, 34, 35) were the exception; ordinarily the lion devoured the prey. **Two legs**—Literally, *shin bones.* **Piece of an ear**—That is, small fragments which were overlooked by accident. As a shepherd Amos would be familiar with such happenings. **Children of Israel**—Perhaps not the whole nation, but the nobles of Samaria who are described in the following words. **Corner of a bed**—Better, R. V., "couch," or divan. The divan in an Oriental home runs around three sides, the seat of honor being in the corner opposite the door, "where upon the usual cushions is set a smaller one, against which he may rest his head and take a nap" (Van Lennep, *Bible Lands,* 460, 461). The prophet evidently has in mind the extravagant, luxury-loving nobles of Samaria. **In Damascus in a couch**—R. V., "on the silken cushions of a bed." Some Hebrew manuscripts and LXX. read "Damascus" (so A. V.), but the common Hebrew text has a word with a slightly different vocalization, the meaning of which is uncertain. Damascus is out of the question, since Amos is not concerned in this connection with inhabitants of a foreign country. Most commentators read *damask*—similarly R. V, "silken cushions"—the fine material which derives its name from Damascus. However, it is very doubtful that in Amos's day Damascus had already given its name to this material. Nevertheless, we expect a word of some such meaning, or possibly one parallel with *corner.*

In verses 13–15 the judgment is announced once more, in the form of a proclamation. **Hear**—As in verse 9, no one in particular is addressed. This mode of expression is chosen for rhetorical purposes, to introduce in a more vivid and forceful manner the announcement of judgment. **Testify**—Announce solemnly (Gen. xliii, 3; Deut. iv, 26). **The house of Jacob**—Israel; here in the narrower sense, the northern kingdom. **The Lord Jehovah, the God of hosts**—The accumulation of divine titles indicates the solemnity of the announcement. On the first two see on i, 8; on the whole title, which is used again in iv, 13; v, 16, 27; vi, 14, see on Hos. xii, 5.

Verses 14, 15 emphasize the completeness of the destruction. Not even the sanctuaries will escape. **Beth-el**—The chief sanctuary of the northern kingdom. Dan also enjoyed royal patronage (1 Kings xii, 29), but the former was supreme. It was situated about ten miles north of Jerusalem, on the road to Nablûs. Its name—house of God—testifies to its sanctity; and very early in Hebrew history it appears as a sacred place (Gen. xii, 8; xxxv, 7; 1 Sam. x, 3). It was at Beth-el that Amos delivered his message (vii, 13). The ruins of the old town, now called *Beitîn,* lie on the summit of a hill sloping to the southeast, and cover three or four acres. It appears from this verse (compare ii, 8) that numerous altars were at Beth-

him I will also visit the altars of Beth-el: and the horns of the altar shall be cut off, and fall to the ground. **15** And I will smite [i]the winter house with [k]the summer house; and [l]the houses of ivory shall perish, and the great houses shall have an end, saith the LORD.

[i] Jer. 36. 22.——[k] Judg. 3. 20.——[l] 1 Kings 22. 39.

el; whether they were all, nominally at least, consecrated to Jehovah, or whether some were sacred to other deities, is not certain—probably the former. **Horns of the altar**—Important fixtures of the altar (Lev. iv, 7, 18, 30), which offered a place of refuge and safety (1 Kings i, 50, 51; ii, 28). When they are gone the last ray of hope must vanish. The horns of the altar are mentioned frequently in the Old Testament, but their origin is not yet satisfactorily explained. They were found also on altars outside of Israel. On a monument found in Teima, southeast of Edom, an altar is represented with horns curved like those of an ox, rising from the corner. With the sanctuaries the magnificent palaces of king and nobles will be destroyed. **Winter house . . . summer house**—To be understood as collectives; the summer residences and winter residences of king and nobles. For the latter compare Jer. xxxvi, 22; for the former Judg. iii, 20. Ordinarily the summer and winter houses do not appear to have been separate buildings, they were rather different parts of the same house. The upper rooms, if there are two stories, or the outside rooms, if there is but one story, are still the rooms occupied preferably in summer, while the lower story or inside rooms are preferred for winter (Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, i, 478). In exceptional cases people have separate dwellings for summer and winter respectively (Van Lennep, *Bible Lands*, 115). The language here would seem to indicate separate dwellings. An Aramaic inscription found in Zinjirli, near Aleppo, furnishes an interesting parallel to these expressions. In it Bar-rekub, king of Sham'al, a vassal of Tiglath-pileser III, and therefore a younger contemporary of Amos, relates that he beautified his father's house in honor of his ancestors; then he continues, "and it is for them a summer house and a winter house." **Houses of ivory**—Houses whose walls are paneled or inlaid with ivory (1 Kings xxii, 39; compare vi, 4). Since ivory was very costly, only the wealthy could afford this luxury. **Great houses**—Or, *magnificent* (v, 11; vi, 11); R. V. margin, "many houses." The word is so rendered in Isa. v, 9; if so here, it points to the wide extent of the threatened ruin.

CHAPTER IV.

HEAR this word, ye [a]kine of Bashan, that *are* in the mountain

[a] Psa. 22. 12; Ezek. 39. 18.

The Heartless Luxury and Self-Indulgence of the Noble Ladies, 1-3.

These verses are best taken as the continuation of iii, 9ff. The women of Samaria, who by their debaucheries have encouraged the oppression of the poor, must share the punishment.

1. **Hear this word**—As in iii, 1; v, 1. **Ye kine**—Jerome, who was followed by some later writers, understood this to apply to the effeminate nobility, "the rulers of Israel and all the leading men of the ten tribes who spent their time in pleasure and robbery"; others limit it to the nobles condemned in iii, 9ff. However, it is better to understand the words as addressed to the wanton women of Samaria, whose thoughtlessness and luxury had transformed their gentle natures into those of brutes (compare Isa. iii, 16ff.; xxxii, 9ff.). **Bashan**—The very fertile district east of the Jordan and north of the Yarmuk, which was rich in pasture land (Mic. vii, 14; compare Psa xxii, 12). **Moun-**

of Samaria, which oppress the poor, which crush the needy, which say to their masters, Bring, and let us drink. 2 [b]The Lord GOD hath sworn by his holiness, that, lo, the days shall come upon you, that he will take you away [c]with hooks, and your posterity with fishhooks. 3 And [d]ye shall go out at the breaches, every *cow at that which is* before her; and [1]ye shall cast *them* into the palace, saith the LORD.

[b] Psa. 89. 35.—[c] Jer. 16. 16; Hab. 1. 15.—[d] Ezek. 12. 5, 12.

[1] Or, *ye shall cast away the things of the palace.*

tain of Samaria—See on iii, 9. **Which oppress . . . crush**—Indirectly, by insisting upon the gratification of their appetites, though the means with which to do this had to be secured unjustly. The two verbs are combined in Deut. xxviii, 33; 1 Sam. xii, 3, 4, etc. **Masters**—R. V., "lords"; or, *husbands*, which is another meaning of the word. **Let us drink**—Or, *feast*, the feasts including drinking and carousing of every sort.

2. This shameful conduct has aroused the anger of Jehovah. **Hath sworn**—An anthropomorphism. As a man affirms a statement by an oath and thus makes certain its fulfillment, so Jehovah is represented as having affirmed the sentence of doom by an oath (vi, 8; viii, 7; compare Gen. xv, 9–18). **By his holiness**—Mitchell renders, "by his sacred, awe-inspiring personality." Jehovah has pledged his holiness that he will fulfill his threat. The expression is practically equivalent to "by himself" (vi, 8). A. B. Davidson says, "The two phrases have virtually the same sense." "*Holy* as applied to Jehovah is an expression that in some way describes him as God, either generally or on any particular side of his nature, the manifestation or thought of which impresses men with the sense of his Godhead." For a discussion of *holiness* see on Hos. xi, 9. **That, lo, the days shall come**—Better, *Lo, the days are about to come* (see on ii, 13). The conjunction translated "that" serves here to introduce the direct address (G.-K., 157b). **He will** ["they shall"]—Literally, *one shall take you*—you shall be taken (G.-K., 144d). The prophet expects the punishment to take the form of an exile (v, 27; vi, 7; vii, 17). **With hooks**—Both words so translated mean primarily *thorns;* probably the latter served as fishhooks to primitive man. The figure apparently changes in verse 2 to that of catching fish. As fish are taken by fishermen with hooks, so the women are to be carried away by the foreign invader (Hab. i, 14). The picture may be based upon the Assyrian custom alluded to also in Isa. xxxvii, 29; Ezek. xxix, 4 (compare Rawlinson, *Seven Great Monarchies*, i, plate 35). Some, to retain the figure of verse 1, understand it to allude to the putting of hooks into the nostrils of unruly cattle, "but so many should the *cattle* of Samaria be, that for the last of them *fishhooks* must be used." Marti understands both words to designate hooks in general, and he thinks that the prophet has in mind the removal of the carcasses of the fat cattle with hooks put in the nose and the hinder part. Whatever the basis of the picture, the figure is one of absolute helplessness. **Posterity**—R. V., "residue." *Posterity* cannot be correct, since the prophet looks for the judgment in the immediate future (vii, 17); the thought is "every last one of you"; not one shall escape.

In verse 3 the figurative language is abandoned. **Ye shall go out**—As captives. **At the breaches**—Made by the besiegers. **Every cow at that which is before her**—Better, R. V., "every one straight before her," which some interpret to mean that there will be no need of looking for a gate, since the breaches are so numerous (Josh. vi, 5, 20); others, without turning to the right or to the left; hurriedly they will be driven away "as a herd of cows go one after another through a gap in a fence." **Ye shall cast them**—The context fails to indicate who is addressed.

4 [e]Come to Beth-el, and transgress; at [f]Gilgal multiply transgression; and [g]bring your sacrifices every morning, [h]*and* your tithes

[e] Ezek. 20. 39.—[f] Hos. 4. 15; 12. 11; chap. 5. 5.

[g] Num. 28. 3, 4.—[h] Deut. 14. 28.

This difficulty was felt by the Revisers, who translate, without warrant in the Hebrew, "ye shall cast yourselves," and state in the margin, "The text (including the next two words) is obscure." The difficulty vanishes if one vowel point is altered; then it may be translated "ye shall be cast," that is, by your captors. **Into the palace**—R. V., "into Harmon." A. V. is incorrect. The word is the name of the city or district to which the women are to be exiled. Concerning the identification of the locality there exists disagreement both among the ancient versions and among modern commentators. A few of the latter consider the case hopeless; many attempt emendations, but none are quite satisfactory. In all probability the text is corrupt. If it is the name of a city or district it must lie "beyond Damascus" (v, 27). The district suggested by three of the ancient versions (Peshitto, Targum, Symmachus), and by Jerome in a note, namely, Armenia, would meet this condition, and this translation might be defended on linguistic grounds without serious difficulties.

Israel's Failure to Understand the Divine Judgments 4–13.

With iv, 4, begins a new discourse, addressed to the people at large. The occasion was probably a religious gathering, when the people, by their zeal for the external requirements, accompanied by an utter disregard of the divine ethical demands, had revealed their utter misapprehension of the will of Jehovah. In an ironical vein Amos exhorts them to continue their heartless ceremonial worship, "for this pleaseth *you*," implying at the same time that Jehovah takes no delight in it (4, 5). Again and again he sought to make them understand his dissatisfaction with their conduct, and to bring them to their senses, but in vain (6–11). Hence he can do nothing but send a final blow, for which they must now prepare themselves (12, 13).

4, 5. *A mistaken zeal.* **Beth-el**—See on iii, 14. **Gilgal**—The first camping ground of the Israelites west of the Jordan. Its very name (circle, that is, of stones—cromlech) testifies to its sacred character. It is mentioned frequently in the Old Testament; and even after the ark had been removed to a more permanent location it continued to be a favorite sanctuary (1 Sam. x, 8; Hos. iv, 15, etc.). It is commonly identified with the modern *Jiljûl*, four and one half miles from the Jordan, one and one half miles east-southeast of Jericho. Others identify the sanctuary mentioned by Amos and Hosea with *Julĕjîl*, two and one half miles southeast of Nablûs, near Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim (Deut. xi, 30), while some suggest a still different location (2 Kings iv, 38), the modern *Jiljîliyeh*, about seven miles north of Beth-el, in a southwesterly direction from Shiloh. **Come**—The tone of voice would indicate whether Amos was in earnest or not; that he was not is proved by the next verb. **Transgress**—Their religious observances were of no value; they were an abomination, a transgression in the sight of Jehovah. Why? Not because the prophet or Jehovah was opposed to sacrifice and forms of worship as such (see on Hos. vi, 6), but because *their* coming and *their* sacrificing was of a character to arouse the divine wrath. This was due to the absence of the proper spirit in their worship, the inconsistency and corruption of their lives, the introduction of foreign heathenish practices into their worship (ii, 7, 8), and the consequent dis-

after [2]three years: **5** [1]And [3]offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven, and proclaim *and* publish [k]the free offerings: [l]for [4]this liketh you, O ye children of Israel, saith the Lord GOD.

[2] Heb. *three* years *of days.*—[i] Lev. 7. 13; 23. 17.—[3] Heb. *offer by burning.*—[k] Lev. 22. 18, 21; Deut. 12. 6.—[l] Psa. 81. 12.—[4] Heb. *so ye love.*

regard of Jehovah as the supreme God of Israel and his reduction to the level of the Baalim of Canaan. **At Gilgal**—The construction reproduced in R. V. is preferable: "(Come) to Gilgal and multiply transgressions." For the reasons just suggested, the more zealous they were in their heartless worship, the farther they traveled to the sanctuaries, and the more numerous the places visited, the greater the indignation of Jehovah. **Sacrifices**—A general term for sacrifices and offerings, though the word used here is employed frequently in the restricted sense of animal sacrifice. **Tithes**—The tenth part of the income consecrated to the deity. The system of tithing was known among many nations of antiquity. The Hebrew laws on the subject are not very explicit, and it seems, that the details in the administration of the system were not always the same (Deut. xii, 6, 11, 17; xiv, 22–29; xxvi, 12). **Every morning, . . . after three years**—R. V., following more closely the Hebrew, reads for the last, "every three days." The reference is to the bringing of the annual sacrifice (1 Sam. i, 3, 7, 21), and to the triennial payment of tithes (Deut. xiv, 28; xxvi, 12). The prophet exhorts the people ironically to increase their zeal; to bring sacrifice every morning, instead of once a year, and to pay tithes every three days, instead of every three years. Wellhausen suggests a different translation, which is permitted by the Hebrew, "in the morning . . . on the third day." He assumes that it was customary to offer sacrifice on the morning after arrival, and to pay the tithes on the third day; and he interprets the ironical exhortation as calling for the punctilious observance of the prescribed routine. This interpretation does not imply the exaggeration involved in the other, but its accuracy is doubtful because it is based upon an apparently unwarranted assumption. **Offer**—Margin, "offer by burning." See on Hos. ii, 13, where the same word is translated "burn incense." **Sacrifice of thanksgiving**—Offered in recognition of unmerited and unexpected blessings (Lev. vii, 12, 13, 15; Jer. xvii, 26, etc.). **With leaven**—R. V., "of that which is leavened"; Targum, "from violence"; some translate "without leaven." The translation of the R. V. is to be preferred. According to Lev. ii, 11; Exod. xxiii, 18, the use of leaven as a part of sacrifice was forbidden; on the other hand, Lev. vii, 13, would seem to permit its use, and the language of Amos implies that its use was regarded as an indication of special virtue, a conception that may be traced to the extreme zeal of the people, which would cause them to consider hard, unleavened bread too common for their God. Assuming this viewpoint of the people, the prophet exhorts them to do even more than the law requires. **Proclaim and publish**—Not in the sense of exhorting others to bring them, but of letting everyone know their piety and good works; they are urged to sound the trumpet before them (Matt. vi, 2). **Free ["freewill"] offerings**—The offerings brought out of a spontaneous impulse as an expression of irresistible love (Deut. xii, 6, 17). **This liketh you**—Better, R. V., "this pleaseth you," with the emphasis on *you;* Jehovah has no delight in their performances.

6–11. *Seven unheeded chastisements.* Through various acts of providence Jehovah attempted to win back the rebellious people, but without success.

6. Famine. **And I also**—The contrast is brought out more clearly by

6 And I also have given you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and want of bread in all your places: [m]yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD. 7 And also I have withholden the rain from you, when *there were* yet three months to the harvest: and I caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city: one piece was rained upon, and the piece whereupon it rained not withered. 8 So two *or* three cities wandered unto one city, to drink water; but they

[m] Verse 8, 9; Isa. 26. 11; Jer. 5. 3; Hag. 2. 17.

rendering, "But I on my part" (ii, 9). **Have given**—See on iii, 6. **Cleanness of teeth**—That is, famine, identical in meaning with "want of bread." **All your cities, . . . all your places**—Throughout the whole land. Several famines are recorded in the Old Testament. The two most recent preceding the time of Amos are those mentioned in 1 Kings xvii, 12; 2 Kings iv, 38. These, severe enough to be remembered for a long while as special divine judgments, or other famines, unrecorded in the Old Testament, may be alluded to by Amos. The judgment was sent for a purpose, to bring the people to their senses and to lead them back to Jehovah in obedience and love; but the purpose was not accomplished. **Returned**—See on Hos. xiv, 1. The fivefold repetition of the phrase, "yet have ye not returned unto me, saith Jehovah," emphasizes both the love of Jehovah, who wearied not in his efforts to win back Israel, and the stubbornness of the people who would not yield to his pleas.

7, 8. Drought. **The rain**—Heb. *geshem* (see on Joel ii, 23), here rain in general. **When there were yet three months to the harvest**—Since the harvest is in April and May, the drought must have set in during January or February. A drought at that time would be disastrous, and might completely destroy the prospects of harvest. A similar phenomenon occurred in Palestine in the winter of 1894-95. "After raining several times quite heavily in December, especially on the coast, the weather has been since before Christmas pleasant and mild, and if no more rain falls there will be great suffering, for up till now (February 16) no one has filled his cisterns." **Caused it to rain**—The tenses in verses 7, 8 are *frequentatives*. Jehovah did the things mentioned again and again. To the ancients the phenomenon of a partial drought would be an even stronger proof of the presence of the supernatural than a universal withholding of rain. Partial rainfall such as is described here has been experienced in Palestine in more modern times. "There has been a smart shower here (Tiberias), while at Samakh the ground was baked hard, and the grain drooping sadly. The same was true on a former occasion when I came up the Jordan valley. The ground in the Ghor was like a parched desert. There had not been sufficient rain to bring up the grain, . . . while here at Tiberias the whole country was a paradise of herbs and flowers." And again, "It was literally so about Samakh and 'Abadiyeh, while their nearest neighbors were rejoicing in abundant showers" (Thomson, ii, p. 66). **Piece**—Field (Ruth ii, 3; iv, 3). **Two or three cities**—That had suffered from the drought. For the *ascending enumeration* see on i, 3. **Wandered**—Literally, *tottered*, or, *staggered*. The people were so weak from thirst that they could not walk with a firm step. **One city**—One favored with rain. With reference to this passage Thomson says (on the same page): "A fact often repeated in this country. No longer ago than last autumn it had its exemplification complete in Belad Besharah, the ancient inheritance of Naphtali." Since there are few springs throughout Palestine, people are dependent largely upon rain water stored in cisterns; when the rainfall

were not satisfied: [n]yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD. **9** [o]I have smitten you with blasting and mildew: [5]when your gardens and your vineyards and your fig trees and your olive trees increased, [p]the palmerworm devoured *them*: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD. **10** I have sent among you the pestilence [6][q]after the manner of Egypt: your young men have I slain with the sword, [7]and have taken away your horses; and I have made the stink of your camps to come up unto your nostrils: [r]yet have ye not returned unto me, saith

[n] Verse 6, 10, 11.—[o] Deut. 28. 22; Hag. 2. 17.—[5] Or, *the multitude of your gardens*, etc., *did the palmerworm*, etc.—[p] Joel 1. 4; 2. 25.

[6] Or, *in the way*.—[q] Exod. 9. 3, 6; 12. 29; Deut. 28. 27, 60; Psa. 78. 50.—[7] Heb. *with the captivity of your horses*, 2 Kings 13. 7.—[r] Verse 6.

is irregular the water supply soon becomes exhausted. **They were not satisfied**—The water was not sufficient to supply the needs of all. This judgment also was in vain.

9a. Blasting and mildew. 9b. Locusts. **You**—Your fields and crops. **Blasting and mildew**—The two words are frequently joined (Deut. xxviii, 22; 1 Kings viii, 37; Hag. ii, 17). The former, from a verb *to burn*, describes the disastrous effects of the scorching east wind or *Sirocco* (see on Hos. xii, 1); the latter, literally, *greenness*, is "a blight in which the ears turn untimely a pale yellow, and have no grain."

One word in the Hebrew makes the rest of verse 9 awkward. With a very slight change, favored by most modern commentators, it may be translated, "I laid waste your gardens and your vineyards; and your fig trees and your olive trees hath the palmerworm devoured." **I laid waste**—By some blow not specified by the prophet. **Fig trees**—See on Joel i, 7. **Olive trees**—See on Hos. xiv, 6; Joel i, 10. **Palmerworm**—See on Joel i, 4, where reference is made to the frequency with which locusts visit Palestine.

10. Pestilence and war. **Pestilence**—"What we should term an epidemic accompanied by great mortality." **After the manner of Egypt**—Of the many interpretations suggested the two most probable are, (1) with the severity with which the plagues fell upon Egypt at the time of the Exodus (compare Exod. xv, 26; Deut. vii, 15; xxviii, 60); and (2) with the severity with which pestilence is accustomed to visit Egypt. The latter interpretation sees no specific historical allusion in the phrase. Violent plagues were not infrequent in the Nile lands; it is said that "a violent plague used to occur formerly about once in ten or twelve years." The Hebrew is literally *in the way of Egypt*, which has been interpreted also as equivalent to *from Egypt*, or, *from the direction of Egypt*, indicating not a comparison but the direction from which the pestilence came. It is a matter of history that the northeast corner of the Nile Delta, which is "in the way of Egypt," has always been a nursery of epidemics (compare G. A. Smith, *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, 157ff.). **Slain with the sword**—In battle. War is thought to come from Jehovah (i, 4, 7, etc.). **Young men**—The strength and flower of the nation. 2 Kings ixff. records how bloody the wars, and how great the losses during the century preceding the time of Amos. **Have taken away your horses**—Literally, *with the captivity of your horses*, that is, with your captured horses, the words connecting with the verb "have slain" (2 Kings xiii, 7). Since horses were scarce in Palestine, their destruction would be an additional calamity. **Stink**—R. V., "stench." **Camps**—After the defeat (Isa. xxxiv, 3). The slaughter was so great that the bodies of the dead soldiers and the carcasses of the beasts could not be buried; in a short time they filled the air with a sickening stench. LXX., "I caused your camp to go up in fire in my anger." Again the effect was disappointing.

11. Earthquake. Some consider verse 11 a summary of all preceding

the LORD. **11** I have overthrown *some* of you, as God overthrew [s]Sodom and Gomorrah, [t]and ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning: [u]yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD. **12** Therefore thus will I do unto thee O Israel: *and* because I will do

[s] Gen. 19. 24, 25; Isa. 13. 19; Jer. 49. 18.

[t] Zech. 3. 2; Jude 23.—[u] Verse 6.

judgments, not a description of a new calamity; others, a figure of devastating wars (2 Kings xiii, 4, 7); but it is more natural to interpret it as a description of an earthquake causing serious havoc in Israel. Palestine has suffered frequently from earthquakes, especially in the border districts. During the past ten years four earthquakes are said to have visited the country. The most disastrous of which more or less complete accounts have been preserved were those of 31 B. C., in which, according to Josephus, some thirty thousand persons perished, and of January 1, 1837. A vivid account of the horrors of the latter is given in Robinson, *Biblical Researches in Palestine*, ii, 529–531, note xli. The only earthquake mentioned in the Old Testament is that mentioned in the days of Uzziah (i, 1; compare Zech. xiv, 5), unless we class in the same category the destruction of the cities of the Plain (compare G. A. Smith, *Historical Geography*, p. 508f.). The allusion cannot be to the one mentioned in i, 1, unless we suppose that Amos retouched his prophecies when he collected them subsequent to the earthquake (see p. 195). He may have in mind any similar catastrophe. **Some of you**—R. V., "cities among you"; literally, *among you*. Not the whole country suffered; nevertheless, all should heed the warning. **God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah**—The point of comparison is the completeness of the ruin. As an illustration of this the destruction of these cities (Gen. xix) is mentioned several times in the Old Testament (Deut. xxix, 23; Jer. xlix, 18; Isa. i, 7, etc.). **Ye**—Those that escaped. **A fire brand plucked out of the burning**—A picture of narrow escape. They were almost consumed, only the divine mercy saved them (Isa. i, 9; compare Zech. iii, 2). But even in the face of ruin and with this overwhelming evidence of the divine love the people hardened their hearts. The divine love and mercy (ii, 9ff.), as well as the divine judgments (iv, 6ff.) failed to accomplish the divine purpose. Nothing more can be done. Destruction is inevitable.

On the philosophy underlying iv, 6–11, see in part comment on iii, 6. To it may be added that in the ancient world it was customary to ascribe all calamities to the wrath of the deity, manifesting itself either arbitrarily or on account of sins committed by the devotees. The Hebrew prophets believed that Jehovah's wrath was aroused by sin, that his righteousness demanded the punishment of sin, and that the punishment would take the form of some calamity to be experienced in this present life. They believed also that these calamities had a corrective purpose. These two beliefs underlie the prophetic explanation of calamities. Since secondary causes and the working of natural laws were entirely disregarded, it never occurred to the prophets that any calamity could come without Jehovah's direct interference, and without a punitive or corrective purpose. With a clearer conception of the character of God we may hesitate to believe that every time a famine or drought or earthquake occurs God is especially angry with those who have to suffer, and yet there can be no doubt that "the instinct is sound which in all ages has led religious people to feel that such things are inflicted for moral purposes."

12, 13. *The sentence.* The corrupt nation must bear a heavier blow. **Therefore**—Because previous judgments have failed. **Thus**—How? One would expect a description of the

this unto thee, [x]prepare to meet thy God, O Israel 13 For, lo, he that formeth the mountains, and createth the [s]wind, [y]and declareth unto man what *is* his thought, [z]that maketh the morning darkness, [a]and treadeth upon the high places of the earth, [b]The LORD, The God of hosts, *is* his name.

[x] See Ezek. 13. 5; 22. 30; Luke 14. 31, 32.——[s] Or, *spirit.*——[y] Psa. 139. 2; Dan. 2. 28.

[z] Chap. 5. 8; 8. 9.——[a] Deut. 32. 13; 33. 29; Mic. 1. 3.——[b] Isa. 47. 4; Jer. 10. 16; chap. 5. 8; 9. 6.

threatened judgment, for the words point to something not yet mentioned, but no description is given. This very indefiniteness suggests the worst. **This**—Points to the same thing as *thus*. **Because**—Because this terrible and indescribable judgment is about to fall. **Prepare to meet thy God**—Who is coming in judgment. The words cannot be interpreted as an exhortation to repentance, except in the sense in which "every prediction of disaster was in itself an exhortation to repentance." They are addressed to the whole nation; but Amos, when delivering this discourse, evidently no longer expected national repentance (but compare v, 4ff.). They are rather an appeal to prepare for the worst. However, this does not exclude the possibility of repentance on the part of isolated individuals (v, 15). 13. The fulfillment of the threat is assured by the character and power of Him who inspired it. **For**—The transition is abrupt; there is an ellipsis in thought. The connection may be expressed thus: "Prepare to meet thy God. Do not mock or disregard this announcement, for he who formeth the mountains . . . , the almighty Jehovah, is the author of it." Verse 13, therefore, serves a purpose similar to that of ii, 3–8, to win a reverent hearing for the prophet's message. The verbs are participial forms throughout, and may be translated, without the relative construction, "He formeth . . . he createth. . . ." **Formeth the mountains**—The verb is one used of the occupation of the potter. Jehovah finds it as easy to fashion mountains as it is for the potter to fashion a vessel (Gen. ii, 7, 8, 19; compare Psa. civ, 8). **Createth**—While the verb does not imply the making of "something out of nothing," it is used in the sense of producing something *fundamentally new* by powers transcending the ordinary powers of man. **Wind**—Not "spirit"; may include all the "unseen but mighty forces of nature." **What is his thought**—Not the thought of Jehovah, but the thought of man. It requires greater powers to discover the secret thoughts of man than to make known one's own thoughts to another. Jehovah possesses the greater power; that he can do the other is assumed throughout the Old Testament. The ancient versions present different readings, each one going its own way. **Maketh the morning darkness**—Or, *maketh darkness into morning.* The last word is literally *dawn.* He does this by his sudden appearance in a storm cloud (Psa. xviii, 9), or by the natural change of day into night, or night into day. Some interpret it, with less probability, of the transformation of spiritual darkness into light. **Treadeth upon the high places of the earth**—Jehovah is described frequently as riding upon the clouds; in doing so he treads upon the high places, the mountains of the earth (Psa. xviii, 10; Mic. i, 3; compare Judg. v, 4, 5). **Jehovah, The God of hosts**—The mention of this title would in itself call attention to the majesty and power of Jehovah (see on Hos. xii, 5; compare Amos iii, 15). On the authenticity of iv, 13, and the similar passages v, 8, 9; ix, 5, 6, see Introduction, pp. 217ff.

CHAPTER V.

ADDRESS CONTAINING LAMENTATIONS, EXHORTATIONS, REPROOFS, AND THREATS OF RUIN, 1–17.

It seems more in accord with the contents of chapter v to separate

CHAPTER V.

HEAR ye this word which I [a]take up against you, *even* a lamentation, O house of Israel. 2 The virgin of Israel is fallen; she shall no more rise: she is forsaken upon her land; *there is* none to raise her up. 3 For thus saith the Lord GOD; The city that went out *by* a thousand shall leave an hundred, and that which went forth *by* an hundred shall leave ten, to the house of Israel.

[a] Jer. 7. 29; Ezek. 19. 1; 27. 2.

verses 1–17 from verses 18–27; verse 18 introduces a new thought, and the form of address differs from that in the preceding verses, resembling more closely vi, 1ff. Even within 1–17, distinct breaks may be recognized. In some cases the logic would be improved by a rearrangement of the verses. As they stand now, the discourse opens with a dirge, in which the overthrow of Israel is represented as accomplished (1–3). This fate is well merited, since the people have disregarded utterly the demands of Jehovah. They have sought him by a ritual which he does not value; on the other hand, they have spurned the virtues which he prizes (4–10). Verses 8, 9 contain another ascription of praise to Jehovah (compare iv, 13), to remind the hearers of the majesty of Jehovah, and thus to impress them with the importance of heeding his message. They are apparently incorrigible, therefore swift judgment will overtake them (11–13); nevertheless, sincere repentance may result in the salvation of at least a remnant (14, 15). But the prophet seems to realize that such hope is vain; at any rate, he reiterates the sentence of doom (16, 17).

1–3. *A dirge.* **Hear ye this word**—Compare iii, 1; iv, 1. **Lamentation**—Heb. *ḳînāh*. A technical term for a dirge in memory of a departed friend. It is not a spontaneous expression of grief, but a formal composition, long or short, artificially constructed. These dirges are composed in a peculiar meter, the so-called *ḳînāh* verse, in which the lines are longer than ordinarily in Hebrew poetry, each consisting of two parts, of which the second is a little shorter than the first, the ratio being about 3 to 2. The lament is contained in verses 2, 3; verse 3 giving the explanation of verse 2. The *ḳînāh* meter is observed only in verse 2; it may be restored approximately in verse 3 by omitting the introductory words and "to the house of Israel" at the close. While it is not possible to reproduce exactly the meter of the Hebrew, the following rendering of verses 2, 3 (with the omissions suggested) indicates approximately the character of the *ḳînāh* compositions:

(a) Fallen, no more shall she rise, (b) virgin Israel,
(a) Flung down on her own ground (b) no one to raise her.
(a) The city that goeth forth a thousand (b) shall have left a hundred,
(a) And she that goeth forth a hundred (b) shall have left ten.

Virgin of Israel—"The earliest extant example of the personification of a nation or community as a woman." Later such personifications became quite common (Jer. xviii, 13; xxxi, 4, 21; compare Isa. x, 32; xxxvii, 22, etc.; see on Hos. ii, 2). **Is fallen**—The *prophetic* perfect. The calamity is still future, but the prophet is so certain of its coming that he sings the dirge as if the nation had already died. The wounds inflicted are so grievous that she cannot rise, nor is there anyone to help her up. **Forsaken**—R. V., "cast down." The verb implies the use of force—flung down—and the abandonment to destruction (Ezek. xxix, 5; xxxii, 4). Verse 3 indicates the nature of the calamity that will reduce Israel to such sore straits; her fighting force is to be reduced to one tenth of its present numbers. **Went out**—To battle. **A thousand**—A city that can furnish a thousand fighting men must be of considerable size.

4 For thus saith the LORD unto the house of Israel, [b]Seek ye me, [c]and ye shall live: 5 But seek not [d]Beth-el, nor enter into Gilgal, and pass not to [e]Beer-sheba: for Gilgal shall surely go into captivity, and

[b] Verse 6; 2 Chron. 15. 2; Jer. 29. 13.—[c] Isa. 55 3.—[d] Chap. 4. 4.—[e] Chap. 8, 14.

An hundred—A smaller town. Great and small cities shall suffer alike.

Justification of the judgment, and exhortation to repentance, 4–10.

That Amos believed in the possibility of a universal "return" of Israel is nowhere stated or implied; that he hoped for some salutary effects of his preaching cannot be doubted; it is implied in v, 15, and in the fact that he continues his exhortation to "seek Jehovah." Who of the people would repent and who would persist in rebellion he could not know; therefore he must exhort all that he may "save some." This he does in verses 4ff. At the same time his exhortation supplies the justification for the divine judgment; they have done the things that are not acceptable to God, and have left undone the things in which he takes delight. Notwithstanding the abruptness of transition from 1–3 to 4 the logical connection between the two parts is not difficult to see. In 1–3 the prophet bemoans the humiliation of Israel. He would have been unfit to act as a messenger of Jehovah had not the contemplation of this fate moved him to compassion and aroused a longing that the terrible calamity might be averted. In the anxiety of his heart he bursts forth in a new exhortation, hoping that, perchance, he may yet succeed in bringing at least some to repentance, and thus avert the doom. Harper interprets verses 4, 5 as injunctions given in the past, disobedience to which furnishes the reasons for the disaster described in verses 2, 3; and he makes verse 6 the beginning of Amos's exhortation. This interpretation is less natural; it certainly is no improvement over the one commonly accepted.

4, 5. The prophet begins again with the solemn "Thus saith Jehovah."

Seek ye me, and ye shall live—Heb. "Seek ye me, and live"; that is, If ye seek me ye shall surely live (G.-K., 110f.). Return to Jehovah will save them from the threatened calamity. *To seek* the Deity has a twofold meaning in the Old Testament: (1) To go to the shrine to offer sacrifice (verse 5), or to consult the oracle (Gen. xxv, 22; 1 Sam. ix, 9, etc.); (2) to enter into fellowship with the Deity in love and obedience (Hos. x, 12; Isa. ix, 13, etc.). In the latter sense Amos uses it here. **Seek not Beth-el**—See on iii, 14. Nominally they went to the sanctuaries to "seek" Jehovah (see preceding comment); in reality their desire was to participate in the joyous festivals celebrated there under the guise of religion. Such worship could awaken no response in Jehovah. **Gilgal**—See on iv, 4. **Beer-sheba**—Also a very ancient sanctuary (Gen. xxi, 14; xxvi, 25; xlvi, 1). Israelites desirous of visiting it had to *pass over* their borders and the borders of Judah, for it was located in the extreme south, in the *Negeb*. The long journeys were undertaken probably only on special occasions. The character of the worship at Beer-sheba, in all probability, differed but little from that at the other Hebrew sanctuaries. Its ruins are represented by the modern *Bîr-es-Seba'*, about fifty miles south-southwest of Jerusalem, about twenty-eight miles southwest of Hebron. These sanctuaries can offer no permanent refuge, for they also are doomed (compare Isa. i, 29–31). It is difficult to reproduce the paronomasia which is very marked in 5b, *Gilgāl gālōh yigleh* and *Beth-ēl* (*beth*) *āven*. "*Gilgal* shall taste the *gall* of exile" (G. A. Smith). "*Beth-el* (the house of God) shall become *Beth-aven* (the house of naught)." Wellhausen offers a striking translation: "Gilgal wird zum Galgen gehen, und Beth-el

[f]Beth-el shall come to nought. 6 [g]Seek the LORD, and ye shall live; lest he break out like fire in the house of Joseph, and devour *it*, and *there be* none to quench *it* in Beth-el. 7 Ye who [h]turn judgment to wormwood, and leave off righteousness in the earth, 8 *Seek him* that maketh

[f] Hos. 4. 15; 10. 8.—[g] Verse 4.

[h] Chap. 6. 12.

wird des Teufels werden" (*Gilgal* will go to the *gallows*, and Beth-el will become the devil's). **Come to naught**—Heb. *āven*. See on Hos. iv, 15.

In verse 6 the exhortation is repeated with a few changes. *Jehovah* is used instead of *me*, as if Amos were taking up the exhortation uttered previously by Jehovah himself. A new motive for obedience is introduced. Obedience will mean life; disobedience—what? (Compare Isa. i, 20.) **Lest he break out**—A forceful verb, equivalent to *cleave, penetrate*. **Like fire**—The point of comparison is destructiveness. **Joseph**—As the ancestor of Ephraim and Manasseh, the two most powerful tribes of the north (Hos. xiii, 1), *Joseph* stands here for *Israel*, that is, the northern kingdom (v, 15; vi, 6). Hosea uses in the same sense *Ephraim* (v, 3; vi, 4, etc.). *House of Joseph*—house of Israel—kingdom of Israel. **And devour it**—An unexpected change in the original from masculine to feminine, as if from now on *fire* were the subject. This makes the construction harsh; therefore Nowack suggests a slight emendation: "lest he will kindle the house of Joseph with fire, which will devour. . . ." The conflagration will prove disastrous, for there is no one to quench it (Isa. i, 31; Jer. iv, 4). Jehovah alone could do it, but he is sending the fire. **In Beth-el**—Literally, *for Beth-el;* LXX., "for the house of Israel." While this is the thought expected here, it is not necessary to suppose that the present Hebrew text is incorrect. Beth-el, as the religious center, might represent the entire kingdom.

The transition from verse 6 to 7ff. is again abrupt, and the logical connection between the two parts has been variously explained. The most natural explanation is to regard verse 7 a justification of the prophet's earnest exhortation to seek Jehovah. The exhortation is needed, for at present they are not seeking him in a manner that will enable them to find him; far from it, they are doing the very things that will cause him to hide his face. As in ii, 7, the participial construction is used, which is reproduced correctly in English by the relative clause connected with the subject implied in *seek* (verse 6): "You who are living such godless and immoral lives, seek Jehovah." **Wormwood**—A plant having a bitter juice (Deut. xxix, 18; Prov. v, 4), unpalatable and, when drunk to excess, noxious. In Scripture it is always used as a symbol of that which is unpleasant and bitter (vi, 12; Jer. ix, 15). **Judgment**—R. V., "justice"; here the administration of justice. Under normal conditions this is desirable and of great value, but they have changed its character so that it has become undesirable and bitter. **Leave off righteousness in the earth**—More accurately, R. V., "cast down righteousness to the earth," instead of "establishing" it (verse 15). *Righteousness*—justice, equity (2 Sam. viii, 15; Jer. xxii, 3). This they trample under foot, while they exalt violence and oppression. Primarily these are crimes committed by those in authority, but all have become corrupt (compare Isa. iii, 12), so that the description fits all.

The next two verses (8, 9) resemble closely iv, 13. Like the latter, and for similar reasons, they are denied to Amos (see Introduction, pp. 217ff). In this instance the objections derive additional weight from the fact that the interruption of the thought is more apparent, verse 10 being the natural continuation of verse 7. Whether from Amos or not, the verses, like iv, 13, present a reason why the list-

the [i]seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, [k]and maketh the day dark with night: that [l]calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: [m]The LORD *is* his name: **9** That strengtheneth the [l]spoiled against the strong, so that the spoiled shall come against the fortress. **10** [n]They

[i] Job. 9. 9; 38. 31.—[k] Psa. 104. 20.

[l] Job 38. 34; chap. 9. 6.—[m] Chap. 4. 13.—[l] Heb. *spoil*.—[n] Isa. 29. 21.

eners should receive the prophetic message with reverence and ready obedience. Assuming that they are authentic, two ways seem open for removing the apparent interruption in thought: (1) It is proposed to change the order, so as to read 7, 10, 8, 9, which would require no alteration in the text itself. True, this would make the transition from 10 to 8 abrupt, but no more so than at present, from 7 to 8. (2) Another possibility is to place 8, 9 after 6, in apposition to *Jehovah* in 6, followed by 7, 10. If this is done, 7, 10 cannot be connected very well with the preceding, but must be interpreted as introducing a new thought. To make the beginning more natural, it is proposed to prefix "Woe" (compare verse 16; vi, 1): "Woe unto those who turn. . . . " A few commentators deny that the thought is interrupted. Mitchell, for example, seeks to show the logical connection between 7 and 8ff. in the following paraphrase: "Ye oppressors (verse 7), know ye not that Jehovah, whose mercy ye have spurned, is the maker and ruler of all things (verse 8), a mightier than the mightiest (verse 9)? Therefore, ye enemies of righteousness (verse 10), because ye trample . . . (verse 11)." Absolute certainty on this point is impossible.

8. **The seven stars**—R. V., "Pleiades"; literally, *a cluster*, that is, of stars. **Orion**—Hebrew, literally, *a fool*, a name that may embody an ancient mythological notion, namely, that this star is some fool who dared to rebel against the majesty of the deity, and who in punishment was chained in the sky. The two constellations attracted notice also among the early Greeks, partly on account of their brilliancy and partly "because their risings and settings with the sun marked the seasons." The two represent the whole host of stars as a striking manifestation of Jehovah's creative power (Job ix, 9; xxxviii, 31). **Turneth the shadow of death**—R. V. margin, "deep darkness." The etymology of the word is not quite certain. If it is a compound word it is literally "shadow of death"; if it is derived from a root found in Arabic and Assyrian, but not otherwise in Hebrew, it means simply "darkness"—so LXX. Whatever the etymology, the darkness is the darkness of night, which Jehovah turns into day. With equal ease he turns the day into night. **Calleth for the waters of the sea**—A poetic description of the giving of rain (ix, 6); the waters hear the divine voice and immediately they respond. The natural phenomena enumerated are all evidences of the supreme power of Jehovah. It is less natural to see in the expressions references to extraordinary phenomena, such as eclipses of the sun or the flood. **Jehovah is his name**—With a similar statement close the doxologies in iv, 13, and ix, 6; here it should stand at the close of verse 9. Is its presence at the close of verse 8 another evidence of a possible disarrangement of the verses, or is verse 9 a later addition either by Amos or by some one else? From the manifestation of the divine power in nature the prophet passes, in verse 9, to their manifestation in God's dealings with men. **That strengtheneth the spoiled**—Better, R. V., "that bringeth sudden destruction"; margin, more literally, "that causeth destruction to flash forth." **Against the strong**—Who are able to withstand ordinary foes. **The spoiled shall come**—Better, R. V., "destruction cometh"; as a result of the divine

hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and they [o]abhor him that speaketh uprightly. 11 Forasmuch therefore as your treading *is* upon the poor, and ye take from him burdens of wheat: [p]ye have built houses of hewn stone, but ye shall not dwell in them; ye have planted [2]pleasant vineyards, but ye shall not drink wine of them. 12 For I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins: [q]they afflict the just,

[o] 1 Kings 22. 8.—[p] Deut. 28. 30, 38, 39; Mic. 6. 15; Zeph. 1. 13; Hag. 1. 6.

[2] Heb. *vineyards of desire.*—[q] Chap. 2. 6.

manifestation. **Against the fortress**—The defenses in which the strong put their trust, and which in time of ordinary danger serve as a place of refuge. LXX., "hē bringeth destruction" instead of "destruction cometh," which is preferable.

Verse 10 continues the accusation of verse 7, presenting other evidences of the corruption which impels the prophet to exhort so earnestly. They persecute those who take a stand for the right. **Rebuketh**—R. V., "reproveth." **In the gate**—The principal public place in an ancient Oriental town, where court was held and justice administered (verses 12, 15; Deut. xxv, 7; 1 Kings xxii, 10). The rebuke is that uttered in connection with the administration of justice, chiefly by the judge, who condemns unjust practices and silences false accusers, but also by anyone who rises in defense of the right (Isa. xxix, 21). **Speaketh uprightly**—In defense of those accused unjustly. **Abhor**—A stronger word than *hate.*

11–13. *Israel's moral depravity demands speedy judgment.* The sin which arouses the indignation of the prophet most is the oppression of the poor (ii, 6, 7). In punishment the unjustly gained possessions will be withdrawn. **Therefore**—Introduces the sentence, as in iii, 11; iv, 12. **Your treading is upon the poor**—R. V., "ye trample upon the poor." A figure of excessive cruelty (compare ii, 7). **Take from him burdens** ["exactions"] **of wheat**—This *corn tax* does not refer to bribes given to corrupt judges, but to "presents which the poor *fellahin* had to offer to the grasping aristocrats" in order to secure permission to retain at least a part of their products (1 Sam. xxv, 7ff.). **Hewn stone**—In ancient times the houses of the Israelites were built of baked or sun-dried bricks; the use of hewn stone, a sign of wealth and luxury, may have been introduced during the prosperous eighth century B. C. The means which enabled the rich to build these houses were acquired by oppression (Mic. iii, 10). But Jehovah will drive them from the magnificent palaces. **Pleasant vineyards**—The vineyards in the fruit of which they expected to take delight. In these expectations also they will be disappointed (Deut. xxviii, 30, 38, 39; Isa. v, 8–10; Zeph. i, 13; compare Amos ix, 14). In order to secure a more perfect parallelism, consisting of three sentences, each having a protasis and an apodosis, Hitzig suggests as a better translation for the first two clauses, "Forasmuch, therefore, as ye trample upon the poor, ye shall take presents from him of wheat"; that is, you will become so poor that you will be compelled to accept alms from him who is now poor.

In justification of this sentence the prophet continues, in verses 12, 13, the description of the deplorable condition, the maladministration of justice receiving the severest condemnation. In verse 12 the translation of R. V. is to be preferred: "For I know how manifold are your transgressions, and how mighty are your sins—ye that afflict the just, that take a bribe, and that turn aside the needy in the gate *from their right.*" The popular idea was that Jehovah took little or no notice of their conduct (Hos. vii, 2); he assures them that he knows both the magnitude and the multitude of their sins. **Afflict**—G. A. Smith, "browbeat." **Just**—See on *righteous* (ii, 6). **Bribe**—The Hebrew word so

they take [3]a bribe, and they [r]turn aside the poor in the gate *from* their *right*. 13 Therefore [s]the prudent shall keep silence in that time; for it *is* an evil time. 14 Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live: and so the LORD, the God of hosts, shall be with you, [t]as ye have spoken. 15 [u]Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate: [x]it may be that the LORD God of hosts will be gracious unto the rem-

[3] Or, *a ransom.*——[r] Isa. 29. 21; chap. 2. 7.——[s] Chap. 6.10.——[t] Mic. 3. 11.

[u] Psa. 34. 14; 97. 10; Rom. 12. 9.——[x] Exod. 32. 30; 2 Kings 19. 4; Joel 2. 14.

translated is used ordinarily in the sense of *ransom*, the price paid for a life (Exod. xxi, 30). Num. xxxv, 31, forbids the taking of a ransom for the life of a murderer. In the light of this passage the words of Amos are thought by some to be a condemnation of the judges who allow rich murderers to escape capital punishment on the payment of an illegal ransom. It is not impossible, however, that here, as in 1 Sam. xiii, 3, the word is used in the more general sense suggested by the English *bribe*, an illegal gift presented to the judge to secure exemption from merited punishment of any sort. **Turn aside the poor** ["needy"]—Discrimination was shown against the needy, who were unable to offer bribes (Isa. i, 23; x, 2; compare Isa. i, 17; Exod. xxiii, 6, etc.). **In the gate**—See on verse 10.

Marti thinks that verse 13 bears every mark of a later interpolation, but without good reason, for the verse fits admirably, not as a reiteration of the announcement of judgment but as an additional indication of the hopelessness of the present situation. No longer are any attempts made to bring about a reformation. **The prudent**—The worldly wise, who knows when he is well off, and who is interested primarily in his own welfare. There is no indication that Amos approves the attitude of these *prudent* men; he simply states a fact. He himself, caring first of all for the interests of the people, does not and cannot keep silent (iii, 8; vii, 15). **Shall keep silence**—Better, *does keep silent;* does not lift up his voice in rebuke or exhortation, because he fears the hostility of the powerful. **In that time**—R. V., "such a time"—as described in verse 12. **An evil time**—Not only because exhortation is futile, but also because personal inconvenience and suffering come to him who attempts to stem the tide.

14, 15. In spite of the apparent hopelessness, the prophet renews his appeal, declaring that, if the exhortation is heeded, Jehovah may yet be gracious to a remnant of Joseph. **Seek good**—Practically the same as "seek Jehovah" (verse 6; compare verse 4). Jehovah is found by him who is anxious about doing good (Isa. i, 16, 17; Mic. vi, 8). **Not evil**—As they were doing (verse 12). **Live**—See on verse 4. **And so**—If you seek good. **Jehovah, the God of hosts**—See on iii, 13. **With you**—To bless and protect. **As ye have spoken**—See general remarks on iii, 1; iv, 3 (p. 207; compare verse 18; Mic. iii, 11). The exhortation is repeated and explained in even stronger terms in verse 15. A complete transformation is needed. **Hate the evil**—Not uprightness (verse 10). **Love the good**—The morally good instead of an elaborate ceremonial (verse 5; iv, 5), or actual wrongdoing (iii, 10). **Establish judgment** ["justice"]—Enthrone it, instead of trampling it upon the ground (verse 7). This phase of right doing demanded special emphasis in the days of Amos. **In the gate**—The place of judgment (verse 10), where it was most persistently outraged (verse 12). If the warning is heeded Jehovah may yet save from utter annihilation. **Joseph**—See on verse 6. **Remnant**—The prophet undoubtedly has in mind the remnant mentioned frequently in the prophetic writings, of whose future glorification speaks ix, 11–15. All the prophets are convinced of the certainty of judgment; and all believe that out of

nant of Joseph. 16 Therefore the LORD, the God of hosts, the Lord, saith thus; Wailing *shall be* in all streets; and they shall say in all the highways, Alas! alas! and they shall call the husbandman to mourning,

[y] Jer. 9. 17.—[z] Exod. 12. 12; Nah. 1. 12.

and [y]such as are skilful of lamentation to wailing. 17 And in all vineyards *shall be* wailing: for [z]I will pass through thee, saith the LORD. 18 [a]Woe unto you that desire the day of the LORD! to what end *is* it

[a] Isa. 5. 19; Jer. 17. 15; Ezek. 12. 22, 27; 2 Pet. 3. 4.

it will be saved a penitent, faithful few, the holy seed (Isa. vi, 13), which will grow into a new nation of God. Some writers suppose, though without warrant, that the use of the term implies that Israel had already been reduced, at the time of such use, to a remnant, that is, a fragment of its former prestige and power (see general remarks on Hos. ii, 14–23, and Introduction, pp. 35ff.).

The prophet continues in verses 16, 17 as if the people had declared their determination to persist in rebellion, and he proceeds to announce once more the imminent doom. **Therefore**—Because of their corruption and unwillingness to heed the warning. Again weight is given to the announcement by the accumulation of divine titles (iii, 13). **Wailing . . . mourning**—For the slain (see on Joel i, 13). This wailing will be heard everywhere, in city and country. **Streets**—Better, R. V., "the broad ways"; literally, *wide places*, that is, in the open squares in the cities, especially near the gates (Neh. viii, 1), where the people were accustomed to gather. **Highways**—Literally, as R. V., "streets," of cities and villages. **Alas! alas!**—Hebrew, *hô! hô!* probably the usual cry of lamentation. **They shall call**—The subject is indefinite—(he) shall be called (G.-K., 144f.). **Husbandman**—Who is at work in the fields. He is called to mourn for some loved one. Evidently the judgment is expected to fall suddenly. **And such as are skillful of lamentation to wailing**—Literally, *and wailing unto those who are skillful of lamentation.* In either case the verb "they shall call" must be supplied. The English translators are probably correct in suspecting the accidental transposition of two words. The *skillful of lamentation* are the professional mourners, ordinarily women, hired, whenever a death occurs, to sing songs of mourning (Jer. ix, 17; Matt. ix, 23). The word *lamentation* used here is a more general term than that in verse 1. **Vineyards**—Where joy and gladness are ordinarily looked for (Judg. ix, 27; Isa. xvi, 10). The whole land will become a land of mourners. Why this lamentation? **Pass through**—In judgment (compare Exod. xii, 12).

The Darkness and Despair of the Day of Jehovah, 18–27.

The new section opens with a startling woe upon those who desire the day of Jehovah. They will be sorely disappointed, for it will be a day of terror and disaster (18–20). It cannot be otherwise since, in truth, they are enemies of Jehovah. Their service is an abomination to him, because it is not in accord with his requirements (21–25). As a result the terrors of Jehovah, in the form of an exile, will fall upon them (26, 27)

18–20. *The day of Jehovah a day of calamity and ruin.* **Woe**—Introduces frequently announcements of judgment (Isa. v, 8ff.; x, 1, etc.). In the light of Amos's general attitude it becomes exceedingly doubtful that it "implies commiseration rather than denunciation" (Driver). **Desire**—Literally, *desire for themselves*, because they expect it to be a day of triumph. **Day of Jehovah**—See on Joel i, 15. **To what end**—R. V., "Wherefore would ye have." A question of amazement that they should desire that day. What good will it be when it does come? The prophet does not leave them in uncertainty as to what they may expect. Would it not be

for you? [b]the day of the LORD *is* darkness, and not light. **19** [c]As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him. **20** *Shall* not the day of the LORD *be* darkness, and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it?

[b] Jer. 30. 7; Joel 2. 2; Zeph. 1. 15.—[c] Jer. 48. 44.—[d] Prov. 21. 27; Isa. 1. 11–16; Jer. 6. 20; Hos. 8. 13.

21 [d]I hate, I despise your feast days, and [e]I will not [4]smell in your solemn assemblies. **22** [f]Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept *them:* neither will I regard the [5]peace offerings of your fat beasts. **23** Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the

[e] Lev. 26. 31.—[4] Or, *smell your holy days.*—[f] Isa. 66. 3; Mic. 6. 6, 7.—[5] Or, *thank offerings.*

wiser to shrink from it? **Darkness**—A picture of calamity and distress (compare Joel ii, 2, 31; iii, 15; Isa. v, 30; viii, 22, etc.). **Light**—A picture of prosperity and salvation.

The awful character of the day of Jehovah is described in verse 19 by illustrations familiar to the prophet and easily understood by the people. Though one danger may be avoided, another is sure to come; escape is absolutely out of the question. **Lion**—See on Hos. v, 14. **Bear**—See on Hos. xiii, 8. From the one the peasant escapes to meet the other; from him he seeks refuge in the house, only to meet his doom there. **Serpent**—Here is meant, probably, the small adder (Psa. xci, 13; Isa. xi, 8), which sometimes hides in the cracks and crevices of old walls, and which "is one of the few serpents that manifest an aggressive disposition" (Van Lennep, *Bible Lands*, p. 308). Being disturbed by the terrified fugitive it comes forth to inflict a deadly bite. Verse 20 is an emphatic restatement, in the form of a rhetorical question, of the truth that the day of Jehovah is one of utter darkness and despair; there is in it not one ray of light and hope.

21–25. *The popular service is an abomination to Jehovah.* The prophet represents Jehovah as out of sympathy with and even hostile to the popular worship. In what sense this is to be understood see on Hos. vi, 6. **Hate, . . . despise**—Exceedingly strong expressions of displeasure. The emphasis throughout is on the pronoun. *Their* practices are an abomination to Jehovah. **Feast days**—See on Hos. ii, 11. **Will not smell**—R. V., "will take no delight." The metaphor is based upon the primitive material conception that the Deity literally smelled the sweet odor of the sacrifice. He indicated his displeasure by refusing to smell it (compare Gen. viii, 21; Isa. xi, 3; Lev. xxvi, 31). **Solemn assemblies**—See on Joel i, 14; compare on Hos. ii, 11, where a different Hebrew word is used. The prophet next enumerates the most common and most popular kinds of sacrifice which Jehovah despises. **Burnt offerings**—See on Hos. vi, 6. **Meat offerings**—R. V., "meal offerings." See on Joel i, 9 (compare Lev. ii, 1ff.; Num. xv, 1ff). **Peace offerings**—Margin, "thank offerings." Not the same word as in iv, 5. They are the offerings prompted by a desire to restore peace, to renew intimate fellowship with God, after, in some manner, it had become interrupted (Lev. iii, 1ff.; vii, 15ff.). **Fat beasts**—Only the choicest animals were used for sacrifice. The joyful music accompanying the sacrifices also was displeasing to Jehovah. **From me**—Literally, *from upon me.* It is oppressing Jehovah like a heavy burden (Isa. i, 14). **Noise**—The use of this word implies a feeling of disgust. "The best music becomes mere noise when, for any reason, it ceases to appeal to him who hears it." **Songs**—Songs and music were undoubtedly a part of religious celebrations from an early period, but their exact nature among the Hebrews in preëxilic times is not definitely known. **Viols**—Our knowledge of musical instruments in ancient times is very fragmentary. The

melody of thy viols. **24** [g]But let judgment [6]run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream. **25** [h]Have ye offered unto me sacri-

[g] Hos. 6. 6; Mic. 6. 8.—[6] Heb. *roll.*—[h] Deut. 32. 17; Josh. 24. 14; Ezek. 20. 8, 16, 24; Acts 7. 42, 43; see Isa. 43. 23.—[7] Or, *Siccuth your king.*—[i] 1 Kings 11. 33.

fices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel? **26** But ye have borne [7]the tabernacle [i]of your Moloch and Chiun your im-

instrument named here is probably a harp-shaped instrument with strings. Josephus says that in his day it had twelve strings (compare Psa. xxxiii, 2) and was played *with the fingers.* Here it represents all musical instruments used in connection with worship (compare *Encyclopædia Biblica,* article "Music").

Verse 24 is to be interpreted not as a threat, that the righteous judgment of Jehovah will sweep over the land with the destructiveness of a flood, but as an exhortation. In the place of a meaningless ceremonial Jehovah desires a righteous life (Isa. i, 10–17). **Judgment** ["justice"] . . . **righteousness**—Practiced in the ordinary relations of life (see on verse 7). **Run**—R. V., "roll"; literally, *roll itself;* that is, manifest itself continually. **As waters**—Great masses of water; a picture of abundance and continuity. **A mighty stream**—R. V. margin, "ever-flowing." The allusion is to a perennial stream. In nearly all the rivers of Palestine the flow of water is interrupted during the dry season. It is not to be thus with the practice of justice and righteousness; it is to go on unobstructed and uninterrupted forever.

Lack of space will not permit even to enumerate the different views held by commentators concerning verses 25, 26. The interpretation suggested here is the one in most complete accord with the context. In verse 25 Amos points out, by the use of a rhetorical question, the absurdity of the people's attempt to secure the favor of Jehovah by their heartless ceremonial worship; sacrifice is not an essential element in worship at all. **Sacrifices**—Animal sacrifices. **Offerings**—R. V. margin, "meal offerings." The same word as in verse 22, here all offerings not consisting of animals. The two cover all forms of sacrifice (Isa. xix, 21; Psa. xl, 6). **In the wilderness**—During the wanderings preceding the conquest of Canaan (Num. xiv, 33, 34; Josh. v, 6). **Have ye offered** ["Did ye bring"]—The answer expected is an emphatic *No!* And yet, the prophet would say, during these forty years Jehovah was as near to you as at any time in your history (ii, 9, 10). If so, his presence and favor cannot depend upon the bringing of numerous sacrifices (Jer. vii, 22), hence you are mistaken when you expect your present elaborate ritual to secure for you the divine favor. Sacrifice antedates the time of Moses, and that some sacrifices were offered during the desert wanderings cannot be doubted. But this is not a contradiction of the statement of Amos, for his question does not necessarily imply a denial of the bringing of *all* sacrifice. The demands of the language are satisfied if his words are interpreted as meaning that during the desert wanderings the people did not conform to a ritual as elaborate as that practiced in his own day; and such interpretation satisfies also the demands of his argument.

26, 27. *The sentence.* The translation of verse 26 and its relation to the context are matters of much dispute. Does it refer to the past, the present, or the future? Should it be rendered "ye have borne," or "ye bear," or "ye shall bear"? Is it a condemnation of past or present idolatry, or a threat of judgment? Is the text correct, or has it suffered in transmission? Are the words translated *tabernacle* and *shrine* common or proper nouns? Is verse 26 to be connected with 25 or with 27? These and similar questions are responsible for the greatest variety of opinion among interpreters. To the present writer it seems best to connect verse 26 with 27 as a threat

ages, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves. 27 Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity [k]beyond Damascus, saith the LORD, [l]whose name *is* The God of hosts.

[k] 2 Kings 17. 6.—[l] Chap. 4. 13.

of judgment, and to translate, with R. V. margin, "ye *shall* take up." This is in harmony with the prophet's reasoning and is supported by Hebrew usage. He believes also that the order of the words in LXX. is to be preferred, and that the first word, A. V., "But," R. V., "Yea," should be rendered "Therefore," which is permissible. The transposition of the words suggested by LXX. results in a more satisfactory connection for the relative clause and in a smoother reading throughout. Verse 26, then, may be rendered, "Therefore ye shall take up the tabernacle of your king, and the shrine of your star-god, your images which ye made to yourselves." Some, taking greater liberties with the text, propose as the original, "Ye shall lift up the shrine of your king and the image of your god, which ye have made for yourselves." **Tabernacle . . . shrine**—Both these nouns occur only here in the Old Testament; hence the exact meaning is doubtful. The former resembles very closely the common Hebrew word for *tabernacle*, and it has been customary, from very early times, to regard it as a synonym of the same. With the meaning of this word fixed, the laws of parallelism required that in the next line a word of similar import should be read; hence the rendering *shrine*, though the most important of the ancient versions take the second as a proper noun. If this translation is adopted *king* must be understood as a poetic synonym of god (but compare Acts vii, 43); and the thought is that they will be compelled to carry the shrines of the false gods with them into exile.

In more recent times, as a result of archæological discoveries, it has become customary to interpret both words as proper nouns, names of Assyrian deities. In order to do this the vocalization of the Hebrew must be changed, though the consonantal text may remain the same. Schrader was the first to identify the first word—Heb. *sikkûth*—with the Assyrian *sakkut*, a name of the god Ninib. Oppert recognized in the second—Heb. *kiyûn*—the Assyrian *kaiwan*, the name of the planet Saturn. Ninib is the god of Saturn, and the two names have been found together on a Babylonian tablet (see *Encyclopædia Biblica*, article "Chiun"). These identifications are accepted by nearly all modern commentators, and verse 26 is now commonly rendered, "Therefore ye shall take up (to carry into exile) Sakkut your king and Kaiwan your star-god, the images which you made to yourselves." This translation sees here an implied condemnation of Assyrian idolatry, which had been introduced into Palestine and had helped to corrupt Hebrew religion. The "host of heaven" was worshiped in Israel before the fall of Samaria (2 Kings xvii, 16); however, 2 Kings xvii, 31, places the introduction of Assyrian religious practices subsequent to the deportation of the northern tribes. That similar customs had been adopted before the time of Amos, as the above interpretation assumes, cannot be asserted with absolute certainty, nor can it be denied. The future may throw additional light on the interpretation of this much-discussed verse.

Verse 27 continues the threat. **Therefore will I**—Better, literally, *and I will.* **Go into captivity**—See iv, 3; vii, 17. **Beyond Damascus**—The place is not named, but the expression implies a far-distant country. Armenia (see on iv, 3) was beyond Damascus, and far distant from Palestine. Acts vii, 43, reads, "beyond Babylon." **Jehovah, . . . The God of hosts**—See on iv, 13.

CHAPTER VI.

WOE [a]to them *that* [1]*are* at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, *which are* named [2b]chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel came!

[a] Luke 6. 24.—[1] Or, *are secure.*

[2] Or, *first-fruits.*—[b] Exod. 19. 5.

CHAPTER VI.

WOE UPON THE LUXURIOUS, THE SELF-CONFIDENT, AND THE PROUD, 1–14.

In vi, 1, the prophet turns once more to the leaders of the people, who, reveling in wealth and luxury, were perfectly content with the present state of things, and were completely indifferent to the ruin threatening the people (1–6). Exile will be their punishment (7). The whole city and nation will be given over to destruction, because the inhabitants have perverted the truth and righteousness and have put their trust in their own resources (8–14).

Condemnation of the nobles, 1–7.

1. **Woe**—See on v, 18. **That are at ease**—Margin, "secure." In a bad sense, those who are recklessly at ease, who are insensible to the dangers lurking on every side (Isa. xxxii, 9). **Zion**—Jerusalem (i, 2), the center of the southern kingdom. There is no reason for regarding this a later interpolation. While the commission of Amos was primarily to the north, it would be strange if, as a citizen of Judah, he would never make mention in his discourses of the home land; especially since conditions in Judah called for the same denunciation as those in the north. Nor is there any reason for giving to the clause a meaning different from that suggested by the English translation. **Trust**—R. V., "are secure." Not, who put their trust in the mountain of Samaria rather than in God, but identical in meaning with "are at ease" (Isa. xxxii, 9, 11). **Which are named chief of the nations**—R. V., "the notable men of the chief of the nations." The Hebrew is ambiguous. A. V. connects *chief* with the subject of the preceding relative clauses. Those who live at ease and are secure are the *chief*, or leaders, of the nations, that is, of Israel and Judah. The Revisers understood the words differently. The first word in Hebrew, apparently entirely misunderstood by A. V., they took in apposition to the preceding relative clauses, at the same time connecting *chief* with *nations*. The first word means literally *the marked ones*, those who stand out prominently on account of wealth and position; therefore, *notable*, or, *distinguished*. These persons are further described as belonging to *the chief of the nations*, Israel, which, as the chosen people of Jehovah, occupied a unique place among the nations of the world (Exod. xix, 5). Some, with less probability, consider the expression ironical: Israel is the *chief* only according to the erroneous estimate of the people. In order to indicate even more clearly the responsibilities of the leaders and the guilt arising from their failure to meet them, the prophet adds, **to whom the house of Israel came**—For judgment and guidance. The house of Israel includes the inhabitants of both kingdoms.

The natural continuation of verse 1 is 3ff.; verse 2 seems to interrupt the thought. For this and the additional reason that the verse is thought to contain historical allusions unsuitable in the time of Amos many commentators consider verse 2 a later interpolation. The second reason is not conclusive, for the historical situation presupposed in verse 2 is by no means certain (see below). Hence, other commentators see no sufficient reason for denying it to Amos, but they admit that it may not be in its original place. Still others, though conceding that the abruptness in transition is very marked, accept it as coming from Amos and retain it in its present position. In view of this divergence of opinion, it may be best,

2 [c]Pass ye unto [d]Calneh, and see; and from thence go ye to [e]Hamath the great: then go down to [f]Gath of the Philistines: [g]*be they* better than.

[c] Jer. 2. 10.—[d] Isa. 10. 9.—[e] 2 Kings 18. 34.—[f] 2 Chron. 26. 6.—[g] Nah. 3. 8.

for the present, to retain the verse where it now stands and to interpret it as an utterance of Amos. But when this is done the interpretation still remains doubtful. In fact, two interpretations are possible: one connecting verse 2 more closely with verse 1, the other joining verse 2 to 3ff. If the former is accepted, the verse is an illustration of the superiority of Israel, justifying the designation "chief of the nations"; the localities named are examples of marked prosperity, which is, however, far inferior to that of Israel. By implication attention is directed to Israel's greater ingratitude. The latter thought receives additional emphasis in 3–6, leading up to the announcement of judgment in verse 7. The other interpretation sees in the cities mentioned examples of fallen greatness and makes the verse a warning to Israel. These cities, once prominent, are now in ruin; therefore, let Israel take heed, for it may suffer a similar fate. To the first interpretation the objection may be made that the cities named, especially Calneh and Gath, were not among the most prominent cities of the eighth century B. C. Would not the prophet have selected more celebrated localities, had he desired to bring before the people examples of marked prosperity? Against the second it may be said that it is exceedingly doubtful that the three places were in ruin at the time of Amos. Gath, it is true, is not named in i, 7, 8, but the silence is not conclusive evidence of the city's disappearance from the scene. On the whole, the first interpretation is preferable. If we knew more of the history of the places mentioned we might understand why Amos selected these rather than some that, judging from our present knowledge, appear to have been more prominent in his day. **Calneh**—Not the Calneh of Gen. x, 10, but the Calno of Isa. x, 9. Where the place is to be sought is not quite certain. Various identifications have been proposed; the most probable is that which connects Calneh with the Assyrian *Kullani*, mentioned in the Eponym Canon as having been conquered by Tiglath-pileser III in 738. Since in that year the latter was fighting in northern Syria, Kullani must have been located there; and it has sometimes been identified with the modern village *Kullanhou*, about six miles from Arpad, a little north of Aleppo. This identification is supported by Isa. x, 9, where Calno and Arpad are named together. **Hamath**—In ancient times a city and city state of great prominence (2 Sam. viii, 9; 2 Kings xxiii, 33; xxv, 21; Isa. x, 9). It is mentioned frequently in the Assyrian inscriptions; its armies fought in the battle of Karkar in 854; Tiglath-pileser III annexed a large part of its territory to Assyria; in 720 Sargon reconquered the city and flayed its king alive. The present name of the city is *Hāmā;* it is located on the Orontes, about one hundred and fifty miles north of Dan. Its population at the present time is estimated variously from thirty thousand to sixty thousand.

From the far north they are to sweep down to the far south. **Gath**—One of the five principal cities of Philistia (see on i, 6–8). Its location is not altogether beyond doubt, though many scholars are inclined to identify it with the modern *Tel-es-Sâfi*, about eleven miles southeast of Ekron (i, 8). The *Tel-el-Amarna* tablets bear witness to its great antiquity. In an inscription of Sargon a city *Gimtu Asdudim* (Gath of Ashdod?) is mentioned, but it is not certain that this is the Gath of the Old Testament. **They**—The cities

these kingdoms? or their border greater than your border? **3** Ye that [h]put far away the [i]evil day, [k]and cause [l]the [3]seat of violence to come near; **4** That lie upon beds of ivory, and [4]stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall; **5** [m]That [5]chant to the sound of the viol, *and* invent to themselves instruments of music [n]like David; **6** That drink [6]wine in

[h] Ezek. 12. 27.—[i] Chap. 5. 18; 9. 10. —[k] Verse 12; chap. 5. 12.—[l] Psa. 94. 20.—[3] Or, *habitation.*—[4] Or, *abound with superfluities.*—[m] Isa. 5. 12.—[5] Or, *quaver.*—[n] 1 Chron. 23. 5.—[6] Or, *in bowls of wine.*

enumerated. **These kingdoms**—Israel and Judah. **Their border**—The extent of their territory. Having named the cities, the prophet requests his hearers to compare their own resources with those of the three cities and to decide which is the more favored. The decision he expects to be in favor of Israel. But if Israel is the more favored, how base its ingratitude!

Verse 3 continues the condemnation of the reckless skepticism and luxury of the nobles. **Put far away**—Not in reality, but in their own minds; they refuse to believe that it is near. **Evil day**—As described in v, 18–20. **Cause the seat** (literally, *sitting*) **of violence to come near**—"They prepare in their very midst a place where, instead of justice, violence may sit enthroned." Emendations are not necessary.

Verse 4 describes the luxury and self-indulgence. **Beds**—Better, *divans*, or, *couches*. **Of ivory**—With frames made of ivory, or whose frames were inlaid with pieces of ivory. These "ivory couches" are often mentioned in the Assyrian inscriptions. Sennacherib claims to have received some as a part of the tribute paid by Hezekiah of Judah (Taylor Cylinder, III, l. 36). **Stretch themselves**—While eating. The ancient custom seems to have been to sit while eating (Judg. xix, 6; 1 Sam. xx, 5, 24; 2 Kings iv, 10). Reclining is first mentioned in this passage; it may have been a foreign custom introduced by the self-indulgent nobles. The innovation would appear to the simple shepherd prophet an abomination. At a later period reclining at the table became the common custom (Matt. x, 9). Another indication of wanton luxury is the eating of only the tenderest and most delicate meats. **Lambs**—Not the common Hebrew word for *lamb*, but one implying choice quality (Deut. xxxii, 14; 1 Sam. xv, 9). **Calves out of the midst of the stall**—Kept there to be artificially fattened (Jer. xlvi, 21; Mal. iv, 2; compare Luke xv, 23). The feasts were accompanied by excesses of every sort (5, 6). **Chant**—R. V., "sing idle songs." Various translations and interpretations of the verb have been suggested. That the reference is to music accompanying the feasts (v, 23; Isa. v, 12; xxiv, 9) cannot be doubted, but since the verb occurs only in this place in the Old Testament its exact meaning is uncertain. However, R. V. is probably correct. **Viol**—See on v, 23. Of uncertain meaning and subject to much discussion is also the last clause of the verse, in which LXX. differs considerably from the Hebrew. **Invent**—Or, *devise*, the most natural meaning of the verb here. **Instruments of music, like David**—Since no other canonical book speaks of David as the inventor of musical instruments, margin R. V. reads "like David's," that is, like those owned by David (1 Sam. xvi, 18). Cheyne changes the text so as to remove all reference to David and reads verse 5, "who play on timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of song." Marti reads, "who consider themselves equal to David in understanding songs." There is no external evidence warranting these emendations. If the present text is original, whether we accept the usual or marginal translation, the passage is important in a discussion of the dates of the psalms and of the relation of David to the

bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments: [o]but they are not grieved for the [7]affliction of Joseph.

7 Therefore now shall they go captive with the first that go captive,

[o] Gen. 37. 25.—[7] Heb. *breach.*—[p] Jer. 51. 14; Heb. 6. 13, 17.

and the banquet of them that stretched themselves shall be removed. 8 [p]The Lord GOD hath sworn by himself, saith the LORD the God of hosts, I abhor [q]the excellency of Jacob, and hate his pal-

[q] Psa. 47. 4; Ezek. 24. 21; chap. 8. 7.

Psalter, as showing that even at this early date David enjoyed the reputation of possessing extraordinary musical skill, even though the allusion here is not to sacred hymns. For the reason mentioned above some commentators, thinking a reference to musical instruments out of place, translate the Hebrew "melodies of song" or "airs of song." This translation, however, is contrary to the common usage of the word. **Drink wine in bowls**—The noun is used commonly to designate the basin in which the sacrificial blood was received; but the emphasis is not on this fact; rather on the large size of the drinking vessels. Cups of ordinary size were too small, they substituted large bowls. **Chief ointments** ["oils"]—The finest and most expensive (see on Joel i, 10).

The thoughts of the nobles were entirely self-centered; their chief ambition was to satisfy their own lusts and fancies; others, even those whose guardians and protectors they should be, must look out for themselves. **Grieved**—Literally, *made sick.* The present condition and prospects for the future were such as to make a sensitive person sick in heart and mind, but the selfish nobles had no concern. **Affliction**—Literally, *breach,* or, *wound.* Including the present corruption, which was a sore in the body politic, and the coming calamity, which would inflict incurable wounds (Isa. i, 5, 6). **Joseph**—See on v, 6.

Verse 7 announces the inevitable judgment. **Therefore now**—The force of the latter is logical, not temporal; the two should be read together, as in Hebrew, "Therefore now," that is, because of the utter incompetence of the nobles. **Go captive**—See on iv, 3; v, 27; vii, 17. **With the first**—Now they regard themselves superior to all; they will retain the lead when the calamity falls. **Banquet**—Better, R. V., "revelry"; literally, *loud noise.* **Stretched themselves**—The same word as in verse 4 (see there). **Shall be removed**—Lamentation (v, 16) will take its place. The three Hebrew words of which 7b consists are very similar in sound; this paronomasia would make the utterance even more impressive.

The extent of the judgment, 8–14.

The divine indignation finds expression in an oath that Jehovah will destroy the entire city (8). The threat is followed by an episode illustrating the completeness of the destruction and the resulting consternation (9, 10). The sentence is expanded in verse 11, and in the next two verses the prophet tries to impress upon the people the absurdity of their boastful attitude toward Jehovah and of their immoral deeds (12, 13). Jehovah will raise up an enemy that will scourge the whole land (14).

8, 9. **Lord Jehovah**—See on i, 8. **Hath sworn**—See on iv, 2. **By himself**—Literally, *by his soul.* The most solemn oath, since there is no greater than Jehovah (see also on iv, 2; compare Jer. li, 14). **Jehovah the God of hosts**—See on Hos. xii, 5. The oath embodies a threat and the justification of the same. The threat is the result of God's abhorrence for Israel, which is due to their arrogant attitude toward him. Once their father, protector, and friend (iii, 2), now their enemy. How great must have been the provocation! (ix, 4; Hos. v, 12, 14; xiii, 7, 8.) **Excellency**—Better, R. V. margin, "pride," that

aces: therefore will I deliver up the city with all [8]that is therein. **9** And it shall come to pass, if there remain ten men in one house, that they shall die. **10** And a man's uncle shall take him up, and he that burneth him, to bring out the bones out of the house, and shall say unto him that *is* by the sides of the house, *Is there* yet *any* with thee? and he shall

[8] Heb. *the fullness thereof.*

is, the arrogant attitude which led them to rebel against Jehovah (Hos. v, 5) and to trust in wealth and human defenses. **Palaces**—See on iii, 10, 11 (compare Isa. iii, 14). **Deliver up**—To the enemy, for plunder (iii, 11) and destruction (verse 11; ii, 14–16; iii, 11ff.). Again the prophet thinks of a foreign invasion. **The city**—Samaria (verse 1), the capital; it will suffer most heavily from the invasion. **All that is therein**—Men, cattle, and possessions of every kind. The originality of verses 9, 10 is questioned by some modern commentators. "This verse (9) and the following introduce a new element into the description of the future punishment, and at the same time a new form and a new style. After these verses the old idea, style, and form recur. The new element is the plague, the new form is the individual experience, the new style, conversational prose, the poetic form being abandoned" (Harper). Marti retains the verses, Oettli rearranges them, reading them in the order 7, 11, 8, 9, 10, which in some respects is an improvement over the present arrangement. As the verses stand now they illustrate the extent of the judgment and the resulting terror. **It shall come to pass**—When the city is delivered up to the invader. While there is agreement concerning the general import of verse 9, there is difference of opinion respecting details. Some interpret: Even large families, having as many as ten members, will be completely blotted out. Others see in *house* a reference to the large households of the nobles. If of these, numbering perhaps hundreds of people, ten should escape the terrors of the siege, they will be slain in the slaughter following the capture. Or, if ten should escape the slaughter, they will surely perish in the pestilence following the slaughter.

Verse 10 carries further the thoughts of verse 9, calling special attention to the effect of the judgment upon the survivors. R. V. translates more accurately, "And when a man's uncle shall take him up, even he that burneth him, to bring out the bones out of the house, and shall say unto him that is in the innermost parts of the house, Is there yet any with thee? and he shall say, No; then shall he say, Hold thy peace; for we may not make mention of the name of Jehovah." **Uncle**—Perhaps better, R. V. margin, "kinsman." All the members of the immediate family having perished, a more distant relative comes to care for the body. **He that burneth him**—Literally, *his burner.* A. V. considers this a separate person, accompanying the kinsman. R. V., more correctly, identifies the two. It would seem most natural to see here a reference to cremation; but that method of disposing of the dead does not seem to have been prevalent among the Israelites. Criminals were, indeed, burned (Lev. xx, 14; Josh. vii, 15); so were Saul and his sons (1 Sam. xxxi, 12), but these were exceptional cases. If cremation is in the mind of the prophet, it must be because he expected conditions to become such as to make burial impossible, either because the dead would be too numerous, or because the enemies would prevent it. An alternative rendering is, "who burneth *for him,*" that is, incense; which would make the expression a reference to the burning of incense in honor of the dead (Jer. xxxiv, 5; 2 Chron. xvi, 14). **Bring out the bones**—The corpse, to care for it. **The sides**—Better R.V., "the innermost parts."

say, No. Then shall he say, [r]Hold thy tongue: [s]for [9]we may not make mention of the name of the LORD. 11 For, behold, [t]the LORD commandeth, [u]and he will smite the great house with [10]breaches, and the little house with clefts.

12 Shall horses run upon the rock? will *one* plow *there* with oxen? for

[r] Chap. 5. 13.—[s] Chap. 8. 3.—[9] Or, *they will not*, or, *have not.*

[t] Isa. 55. 11.—[u] Chap. 3. 15.—[10] Or, *droppings.*

Set apart for the women (compare Psa. cxxviii, 3); in this part the lone survivor has taken refuge. As the kinsman pursues his solemn task he discovers the terrified individual. **Is there yet any with thee**—Dead or alive. The answer is, *No.* **Hold thy tongue** ["peace"]—Literally, *hush.* The speaker is the survivor who, in his anxiety and despair, attempts to silence the kinsman. **Then shall he say**—Literally, *and he shall say.* The subject is again the survivor. The verb is repeated to separate "two parts of the answer which have no immediate connection with each other." **We may not**—Or, *we must not.* The reason for the prohibition is not quite clear. Perhaps the speaker had a superstitious fear that the mention of the divine name would result in additional judgment. The sense is little altered if the words "Hold thy peace . . . " are placed in the mouth of the kinsman, who, by the prohibition would seek to prevent the terrified survivor from adding to his *No* a formula of confirmation containing the divine name. To consider the words an explanatory statement by Amos is less natural.

Verse 11 is the continuation of the sentence in verse 8. **For, behold, Jehovah commandeth**—The invader (14). The words are added to make the transition between 10 and 11 less abrupt, but there is no reason for denying them to Amos. **Great house**—Used collectively; the palaces of the nobles (iii, 15). **Little house**—The less pretentious dwellings. **With breaches**—Or, *into fragments.* **With clefts**—Or, *into splinters.* Palaces and huts will suffer the same fate.

The connection of verses 12–14 with the preceding does not appear on the surface; nevertheless there exists a logical connection. The threat seems to be without effect, and the people, boasting in their own strength, show no concern. Have they not been successful against the mighty Damascus? Let the invader come; they will soon drive him from their borders. Such boast, the prophet says, is absurd (12a), because they have forfeited the support of Jehovah through disobedience to his will (12b); besides, they overestimate their past successes and present resources (13). The invader will surely come and overrun the whole country (14).

12. **Shall horses run upon the rock?**—Or, *cliff.* The answer is an emphatic *No.* The attempt would result in the horses' undoing. **Will one plow there with oxen?**—Again the answer is, *No.* The plow would be broken and the oxen hurt. Every one of Amos's hearers would see the absurdity of doing these things. So, the prophet means to say, it is equally absurd for you to expect the divine help while you arouse Jehovah's anger by perverting justice and righteousness, or to trust in your own resources, whose true value you overestimate greatly; your past successes do not warrant the present optimism. The second question is literally, "Will one plow with oxen?" The answer to this is in the affirmative. The context, however, as already suggested, demands a negative answer. To remove the difficulty the English translators added "there," that is, upon the rock, which meets the demands of the context, and upon this addition the above interpretation is based. Most recent commentators, following the suggestion of Michaelis, divide the last word in Hebrew into two and make a slight change in the vowel points, which results in the reading,

[x]ye have turned judgment into gall, and the fruit of righteousness into hemlock: 13 Ye which rejoice in a thing of nought, which say, Have we not taken to us horns by our own strength? 14 But, behold, [y]I will raise up against you a nation, O house of Israel, saith the LORD the God of hosts; and they shall afflict you from the [z]entering in of Hemath unto the [11]river of the wilderness.

[x] Hos. 10. 4; chap. 5. 7.——[y] Jer. 5. 15.——[z] Num. 34. 8; 1 Kings 8. 65.——[11] Or, *valley*.

"Will one plow the sea with oxen?" This meets the demands of the context, and gives excellent sense. **For**—Better, R. V., "that." **Judgment** ["justice"] . . . **righteousness**—See on v, 7. **Turned . . . into gall**—In defiance of all prophetic exhortations. *Gall* is the same word as in Hos. x, 4, where the translation is "hemlock" (see there). **Fruit**—Result or effect. **Hemlock** ["wormwood"]—See on v, 7. The effects of a faithful administration of justice are always wholesome and desirable; by an unfaithful administration the Israelites have made the effects undesirable and detrimental. For this reason they can expect no help from Jehovah.

13. Will their own resources be sufficient? Certainly not. **Rejoice**—In a spirit of boasting. **A thing of naught**—Literally, *no-thing*. Something that has no real existence. Here not equivalent to *idol* (Deut. xxxii, 21), but their own wealth and resources, which are only temporary, and will fail when most needed. **Horns**—Symbols of power (Deut. xxxiii, 17; 1 Kings xxii, 11; Jer. xlviii, 25). *Take horns*—acquire power. **By our own strength**—Without assistance from God or man. The marvelous successes of Jeroboam II (2 Kings xiv, 25ff.; see Introduction, p. 197) might cause the unthinking to boast in the national strength; Amos declares it will speedily vanish; he places, indeed, a low estimate upon the strength of Israel. He justifies his pessimism in verse 14 by once more calling attention to the determination of Jehovah to overthrow Israel by an enemy against whom resistance will be vain. This interpretation of verse 13 is quite satisfactory, but a few recent commentators, following Graetz, take the two words translated "a thing of naught" and "horns" as proper nouns, names of two cities east of the Jordan, in whose conquest the Israelites boasted. The first—Heb. *lô-dābhār*—is identified with *Lodebar* (2 Sam. ix, 4, 5; xvii, 27), the second—Heb. *ḳarnayim*—with *Karnaim* (1 Macc. v, 26), called *Ashteroth Karnaim* in Gen. xiv, 5. It is thought that the two places were among the recent conquests of Jeroboam, and that these were selected rather than more important localities on account of the suggestiveness of their names.

14. **But**—Better, R. V., "For." **Behold, I will**—See on ii, 13. **Raise up**—As an agent to execute judgment (Hab. i, 6). **A nation**—See at the close of comment on ii, 16. **Jehovah the God of hosts**—The solemn address, the introduction of Jehovah as speaker, the divine title, all combine to add weight to the threat. **Afflict**—Literally, *crush*. Used frequently of foreign oppression (Exod. iii, 9; Judg. iv, 3). **Entering in of Hemath**—R. V., "the entrance of Hamath." On *Hamath* see vi, 2. The *entrance of Hamath* is a very indefinite geographical term, but it is generally identified with the mouth of the pass between the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, which was considered the starting point of the road to Hamath. This was the northern limit of the territory promised to Israel (Num. xxxiv, 8), and to this point Jeroboam II extended his borders (2 Kings xiv, 25f.). **River of the wilderness**—Better, R. V., "brook of the Arabah." The Arabah (see Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible*, article "Arabah") is, in a wider sense, the entire depression through which flows the Jordan and in which are located the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea, and which extends to the Gulf of Akabah, the eastern arm of

the Red Sea. In a narrower sense the term applies only to the part of the declension between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Akabah. Opinions differ concerning the identification of the *brook of the Arabah*. Evidently it marks the southern limit of Israel (not Judah), and is practically equivalent to *sea of the Arabah* in 2 Kings xiv, 25. The latter is undoubtedly identical with the Dead Sea (Deut. iii, 17), but by no stretch of the imagination can the Dead Sea be called a *brook*. The brook must be one flowing into the Dead Sea, but where? It has been identified with the Arnon, flowing into the Dead Sea about halfway down its eastern shore. Most commonly it has been identified with the *wâdy el Aḥsa*, flowing into the Arabah from the southeast about three miles south of the Dead Sea, then turning northward and emptying into the latter. To this identification G. A. Smith objects, not without reason, on the ground that the *wady* was outside the territory of Israel; it marked the boundary line between Moab and Edom, not between Israel and another country. It could mark the southern border of Israel only if Jeroboam had conquered Moab, but evidence of such conquest is lacking. It seems more natural to look for the brook of the Arabah near the northern boundary of Moab. The Arnon meets this condition (Num. xxi, 13). Some commentators believe the brook to be one of the streams flowing into the Dead Sea in its northeastern part, while they understand 2 Kings xiv, 25, to mean that Jeroboam extended the territory "as far as the Dead Sea." In any case, Amos means to say that the entire territory, from its northern to its southern limits, will be wasted by an invader.

With this announcement of utter ruin closes the main part of the Book of Amos. The prophet endeavored to lead the people to repentance, but apparently all his efforts have failed. The leaders show no sign of contrition, and the people continue rebellious.

CHAPTER VII.

Visions Picturing the Execution of Judgment, vii, 1–ix, 15.

With chapter vii begins the third division of the Book of Amos. Its distinctive characteristic is the presence of five visions, by means of which the prophet seeks to enforce, if possible, the contents of the discourses in the preceding parts, laying special emphasis upon the certainty and finality of the judgment. Two visions —the swarm of locusts and the devouring fire—describe a calamity which had already caused much suffering, and was threatening complete destruction, when Jehovah, in his mercy, averted the final catastrophe (vii, 1–6). The third vision—the master builder with the plumb line—does not picture the calamity itself, but portrays Jehovah as decreeing the utter destruction of the house of Israel (7–9). The three visions are followed by an historical section (10–17), in which Amos narrates how the announcement of the judgment stirred the antagonism of the chief priest at Beth-el, who attempted to drive Amos back to Judah. The prophet could not be silenced; he justified his presence by an appeal to the call he received from Jehovah, and repeated his threat, adding a personal woe upon the chief priest and his family. The fourth vision—the basket of summer fruit—announces that the time of mercy is past; the end has come upon Israel (viii, 1–3). To this vision Amos adds fresh denunciations of Israel's sins and announcements of judgment (4–14). The fifth vision—the smitten sanctuary—differs in form from the preceding four, but its purpose is the same, to make clear that Jehovah is determined to make an end of the "sinful kingdom" (ix, 1–6). The prophet combats again the misapprehension that their former choice by Jehovah can be regarded as a permanent safeguard (7, 8), and once more he predicts judgment, now calling special attention to its disciplinary

CHAPTER VII.

THUS hath the Lord GOD shewed unto me; and, behold, he formed [1]grasshoppers in the beginning of the shooting up of the latter growth; and, lo, *it was* the latter growth after the king's mowings. 2 And it came to pass, *that* when

[1] Or, *green worms.*

purpose, promising the preservation of a sound kernel (9, 10). The book closes with promises of a bright future to this faithful remnant (11–15).

1–3. *The swarm of locusts.* **The Lord Jehovah**—See on i, 8. **Showed unto me**—Literally, *caused me to see*—presented in a vision. A just regard for the language forbids the interpretation of the form in which the truths are presented in these chapters purely as a literary device, adopted by the prophet to express in a forceful manner certain truths and convictions which impressed themselves upon him as the result of ordinary processes of thinking. The vision is mentioned as one of the divine means of communication (Num. xii, 6), and the reality of such visions cannot be denied. Modern psychological researches have made possible a clearer understanding of the nature of these visions. The prophet, meditating upon the nature and character of Jehovah, the divine claims upon Israel, and the people's failure to recognize these claims, became so lost in contemplation that he fell into a trance, when all external objects were entirely removed from his mental horizon, he being alive only to the subject uppermost in his heart and mind. While in this sensitive mood, receptive to anything related to the subject of his contemplation, there was impressed upon him, in the form of calamities familiar to the prophet, the certainty of the nation's doom. He in turn presented the pictures to the people. **He formed**—Literally, *was forming.* Amos saw the process. LXX. apparently reads in the place of the verb a noun, "a swarm" or "a brood" (of locusts). **Grasshoppers**—R. V., "locusts." The word used here occurs again only in Nah. iii, 17. Many think that it is descriptive of locusts in the larva stage, when they are first hatched, but this is not certain. For other terms see on Joel i, 4. **The latter growth**—The exact meaning of the Hebrew word is doubtful. It is from the same root as a word translated *latter rain*—the rain falling in March and April (Joel ii, 23); and the word used here is thought by some to refer to the *spring crops*, which mature quickly after the fall of the latter rain. After the fall rains the seed springs up and begins to grow, but the growth is checked by the cold of the winter months; in the early spring the rise in temperature and the latter rain put new life into vegetation. Others interpret the word as referring to the *aftermath*, the second growth after one crop has been gathered. This is the meaning suggested by the English translations. **After the king's mowings**—Whichever translation of the preceding word is accepted, these words, if they are a correct reproduction of the original, must mean that the first crop went to the king as a sort of taxation (1 Kings xviii, 5; compare 1 Kings iv, 7); only the second growth went to the people. While the people were preparing to gather their share the locusts appeared and threatened to devour all. To this interpretation two objections may be raised: (1) It is not certain that it was customary for the king to claim the first crops; the passages quoted in support are not conclusive. (2) The interpretation causes Amos to contradict himself. Everywhere else he makes the king and the nobles suffer most severely (compare verse 9), here he would exempt the king from all judgment; he allows him to gather his share, only the people he makes to suffer. The second objection holds good against another interpretation, which makes *king's mowings* a desig-

they had made an end of eating the grass of the land, then I said, O Lord GOD, forgive, I beseech thee: [a] [2]by whom shall Jacob arise? for he *is* small. 3 [b]The LORD repented for this: It shall not be, saith the LORD.

4 Thus hath the Lord GOD shewed unto me: and, behold, the Lord GOD called to contend by fire, and it de-

[a] Verse 5; Isa. 51. 19.—[2] Or, *who* of, or, for, *Jacob shall stand?*

[b] Verse 6; Deut. 32. 36; Jonah 3. 10; James 5. 16.

nation of the harvest season; the mowing of the royal fields would be the signal that the proper time for mowing had arrived, but out of respect for the king the common people waited until his fields had been mowed. The weakness of this interpretation is shown also by the last suggestion. Respect for the king cannot have been a sufficient reason for letting crops become overripe.

The difficulties vanish if the word translated "mowings" is given a different meaning. It comes from a root meaning originally *to shear* (sheep); only in a secondary sense is it used of the shearing of the fields—mowing. If the primary meaning is retained here the time indicated is *after the king's sheep-shearings*. The shearing of the king's sheep may have been a signal for others to do the same, and this may have become a common designation of the shearing season. If thus interpreted the words determine more definitely the time when the plague of locusts appeared. The spring rains had fallen, vegetation looked promising; but after the sheep-shearing season, perhaps in the late spring, a swarm of locusts covered the land, threatening to destroy completely the spring crops. **When they had made an end**—The Hebrew underlying this translation is peculiar. Besides, it requires the assumption that a second calamity appeared before the mental vision of the prophet; for *it* (verse 3) cannot refer to a calamity already past. A slight emendation results in "as they were making an end;" that is, as they were proceeding to ravage the country, but before they accomplished it. A similar meaning, "when they were on the point of devouring," is given to the present Hebrew text by Mitchell, but this seems grammatically impossible. **Grass**—Better, *herb* (as in Gen. i, 11, 12, 29, etc.); it includes all vegetation.

Seeing that complete devastation is imminent, the prophet appeals for mercy (compare Num. xiv, 19). **Forgive**—The petition shows that Amos thought of Jehovah not exclusively as a stern, uncompassionate judge. The reason for the plea is added. **Jacob**—The people of Israel cannot endure such calamity; they would never recover from it. **Small**—Their resources are limited. LXX. and other versions read, "Who shall raise up Jacob?" **Repented**—An anthropomorphism like "swear" (iv, 2; see on Joel ii, 13). Jehovah responded to the prophet's prayer. **This**—Not some new, unnamed calamity, but the plague of locusts, which was still in its initial stage. **It shall not be**—Shall not be allowed to proceed.

4–6. *The devouring fire*—A second vision, presenting essentially the same truth as the first. **Called to contend by fire**—Called the fire to contend with it. Instead of the locusts Jehovah selected the fire as the agency through which to execute judgment. For representations of Jehovah as entering into judicial controversy with his people see Hos. iv, 1; Mic. vi, 2; Isa. iii, 13–15. The imagery was suggested probably by conflagrations or by excessive summer heat accompanied by drought (see on Joel i, 20). **The great deep**—The deep subterranean waters upon which the earth was thought to rest, and which was thought to supply the water for springs and rivers (Gen. vii, 11; Psa. xxiv, 2, etc.). The fire or heat was so intense that the water dried up. The language is hyperbolical. **And did eat**

voured the great deep, and did eat up a part. 5 Then said I, O Lord GOD, cease, I beseech thee: [c]by whom shall Jacob arise? for he *is* small. 6 The LORD repented for this: This also shall not be, saith the Lord GOD.

7 Thus he shewed me: and, behold, the Lord stood upon a wall *made* by a plumbline, with a plumbline in his hand. 8 And the LORD said unto me, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A plumbline. Then said the Lord, Behold, [d]I will set a plumbline in the midst of my people Israel: [e]I will not again pass by them any more: 9 [f]And the high places of Isaac shall be desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste; and [g]I will rise against the

[c] Verses 2, 3.——[d] See 2 Kings 21. 13; Isa. 28. 17; 34. 11; Lam. 2. 8.——[e] Chap. 8. 2; Mic. 7. 18.

[f] Beersheba, Gen. 26. 23; 46. 1; chaps. 5. 5; 8. 14.——[g] Fulfilled, 2 Kings 15. 10.

up—Better, R. V., "and would have eaten up." **A part**—R. V., "the land"; literally, *the portion*, the portion set apart for human habitation. The expression cannot be restricted to the land of Israel; it means the land as distinguished from the great deep. The land was about to be devoured, when the prophet interceded once more. **Cease**—Not "forgive" (verse 2). The provocation was too great; Amos felt that he did not dare ask for pardon; but perchance Jehovah might avert the final doom. And again Jehovah graciously granted the petition. The description is poetical but not allegorical. The imagery in the two visions was selected because plagues of locusts and disastrous conflagrations were familiar to the people.

7–9. *The master builder with the plumb line.* The third vision differs from the preceding two in that it does not bring to view the judgment itself but Jehovah decreeing the same. Amos sees him as a master builder with plumb line in hand testing a city wall—a figure of Israel—as to its straightness. It is found crooked, and the decree goes forth that it must be torn down. **Upon**—R. V., "beside." **A wall made by a plumb line**—Literally, *a wall of a plumb line.* The fact that the wall is now condemned cannot be used as an objection to the correctness of the reading. A wall may be built straight by the aid of a plummet, yet in time it may settle and become crooked. This is what happened to this wall; and if the latter represents Israel it is an accurate picture of the facts of Hebrew history (Hos. ix, 10; xi, 1, etc.). **With a plumb line**—He seeks to determine whether it is still straight and may be allowed to stand.

This time it is Jehovah who breaks the silence. To understand the lesson it was necessary that the prophet should not lose sight of any feature of the picture. To assure himself on this point and to prepare the way for the explanation Jehovah asks the question, **What seest thou?**—Compare viii, 2; Jer. i, 11, 13. The answer being satisfactory, Jehovah proceeds with the explanation, retaining the figure of the plumb line but interpreting that of the wall. **I will**—Or, *I am about to* (ii, 13). **Set a plumb line**—The plumb line serves as a standard by which both to build and to tear down (2 Kings xiii, 13; Isa. xxxiv, 11). Whatever cannot stand the test of the plummet is condemned to destruction. What was the result of the test in this instance is not definitely stated, but the fact that an announcement of judgment immediately follows indicates that Israel was found wanting. **Pass by them**—Without noticing and punishing their guilt (compare v, 17). Jehovah gives no opportunity for intercession; and the prophet, recognizing the justice of the proceedings, has nothing more to say.

Verse 9 describes the character of the judgment. It will strike with special force the religious centers and the ruling dynasty. **High places**—See on Hos. iv, 13; Mic. i, 5. **Isaac**—A poetic synonym of *Israel* (next clause; compare verse 16). **Sanctuaries**—See on iv, 4; v, 4; viii, 14. They will be

house of Jeroboam with the sword.

10 Then Amaziah [h]the priest of Beth-el sent to [i]Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, Amos hath conspired against thee in the midst of the house of Israel: the land is not able to bear all his words. **11** For thus Amos saith, Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of their own land. **12** Also Amaziah said unto

[h] 1 Kings 12. 32.—[i] 2 Kings 14. 23.

utterly destroyed (iii, 14). **House of Jeroboam**—The ruling dynasty (Introduction, p. 195). Whether the judgment will come during the lifetime of Jeroboam or later is not stated (compare verse 11). Hosea also announces the doom of the same dynasty (i, 4). On the fulfillment of the threat see p. 18. **Sword**—Of the invader (vi, 14).

The experience of Amos at Beth-el, 10–17.

The account of the fourth vision is separated from that of the third by an historical section, in which is recorded the experience of Amos at Beth-el. The incident related is closely connected with the vision immediately preceding. In connection with the latter Amos made startling announcements concerning the destiny of Israel and of the ruling dynasty. These aroused the resentment of the chief priest, who accused Amos of treason and sought to drive him from Beth-el. Amos refuses to go, however, and justifies himself and his message by an appeal to the divine call which impelled him to enter upon the prophetic career. Fearlessly he repeats the previous denunciations and adds a personal woe upon Amaziah and his family.

10–13. *The opposition.* **Then**—When Amos had uttered the startling announcements contained in verse 9. **Amaziah the priest**—Probably the chief priest at the sanctuary of Beth-el. Nothing is known of him otherwise. **Jeroboam**—See Introduction, p. 195. **Conspired**—Not, has entered into conspiracy with others, but, his words are such as will result in conspiracy against the throne. Under normal conditions denunciation of the government and the prediction of the overthrow of the national institutions may rightly be considered treason; and to an unspiritual politician the words of Amos must have seemed treasonable, but the priest, a representative of Jehovah, should have understood the attitude of the prophet. In reality the latter was the only one who did not betray the best interests of the nation. It was only because he considered it essential to the welfare of the people that he was willing that the nation should be exiled and the dynasty overthrown, if only a pious remnant could be preserved to form a nucleus of a new kingdom of God. **In the midst**—At the very center of the national life; that is, at Beth-el, which was the religious center. **Not able to bear**—The message is so revolutionary, the priest means to say, that it will surely lead to serious disturbances. To prove his case he sends to the king a summary of Amos's message. **Jeroboam shall die by the sword**—Not an exact reproduction of the words of Amos (verse 9). The manipulation may have been caused by a desire to arouse more readily the king's resentment. **Shall surely be led away captive**—This the prophet had asserted repeatedly (v, 5, 27; vi, 7). **Also Amaziah said**—Nothing is said of Jeroboam's attitude. Hence Amaziah's attempt to silence Amos has been variously interpreted. Some think that Jeroboam took no notice of the priest's message, or that the reply was not satisfactory, and that, therefore, Amaziah, who had reason to fear for his own position (verse 9), endeavored, on his own authority, to drive out Amos. Others think that it was at the king's command that Amaziah bade Amos flee, though the authorization is not mentioned.

Amos, O thou seer, go, flee thee
away into the land of Judah, and
there eat bread, and prophesy there:
13 But [k]prophesy not again any
more at Beth-el: [l]for it *is* the
king's [3]chapel, and it *is* the [4]king's
court.

14 Then answered Amos, and said
to Amaziah, I *was* no prophet, neither *was* I [m]a prophet's son; [n]but I
was an herdman, and a gatherer
of [5]sycomore fruit: 15 And the
LORD took me [6]as I followed the
flock, and the LORD said unto me,
Go, prophesy unto my people
Israel.

16 Now therefore hear thou the
word of the LORD: Thou sayest,

[k] Chap. 2. 12.—[l] 1 Kings 12. 32; 13. 1.—[3] Or, *sanctuary.*—[4] Heb. *house of the kingdom.*

[m] 1 Kings 20. 35; 2 Kings 2. 5; 4. 38; 6. 1.—[n] Chap. 1. 1; Zech. 13.5.—[5] Or, *wild figs.*—[6] Heb. *from behind.*

Still others interpret the priest's words as a friendly advice to the prophet to leave the country before the wrath of the king should be felt by him. The last interpretation is shown to be impossible by Amos's reply in 14–17. It is, perhaps, best to suppose that Amaziah addressed Amos as soon as he had dispatched the messenger to the king. Having made an appeal to Jeroboam, he thought himself in a position to rid the country, in any manner whatever, of this "troubler of Israel." **Seer**—According to 1 Sam. ix, 9 (where a different word, though identical in meaning, is used), this is an older designation of the men called in later days *prophets;* here the word is used probably with a touch of sarcasm—*visionary, fanatic.* **Land of Judah**—The home of Amos (Introduction, p. 191). **Eat bread**—Make a living. The early *seers* made their living in much the same way as modern clairvoyants (1 Sam. ix, 7, 8); and even among later prophets there were those who *prophesied* "for a reward" (Mic. iii, 5, 11; 1 Kings xxii, 13), who followed the adage, "Whose bread I eat, his song I sing." Such a one Amaziah took Amos to be. **Prophesy there**—In his own country Amos might say anything he pleased; Beth-el needed no prophet, its spiritual interests were well cared for. **The king's chapel**—R. V., "sanctuary." **The king's court**—R. V., "a royal house." From the time of Jeroboam I the sanctuary at Beth-el enjoyed the royal patronage (1 Kings xii, 29, 32), and it is quite likely that the king had a palace there.

14–17. *The prophet's reply.* 14, 15. Amos was a prophet not by profession, but by divine call. **I was no prophet**—Better, throughout verse 14, with margin, "I am." I am not a professional prophet, guided by mercenary motives. **A prophet's son**—This expression is not to be understood in the sense that the father of Amos was not a prophet, but in the sense, "I am not a member of a prophetic guild." *Son* is used in that sense of the companies of prophets at Beth-el, Gilgal, and other places (1 Kings xx, 35; 2 Kings ii, 3, 5, 7, etc.). This interpretation is supported also by the use of the word *son* in the general sense of *belonging to* in other Semitic languages. **Herdman**—Literally, *tender of cattle* (Introduction, p. 192). **Gatherer of sycomore fruit**—R. V., "dresser of sycomore trees" (Introduction, p. 192). **Jehovah took me . . . said**—While he was following his ordinary occupation the divine call came to forsake all and become a prophet of Jehovah to Israel. This call he could not resist (iii, 8). Of these verses G. A. Smith says, "It is the protest of a new order of prophecy, the charter of a spiritual religion." Amos was indeed "the founder and the purest type of the new order of prophecy."

16, 17. Amos, having justified his preaching by an appeal to his divine commission, reiterates and expands his previous message. **Now therefore**—The defense in 14, 15 had put the case in its proper light; now the argument may proceed. **Thou sayest, . . . Thus saith Jehovah**—A striking antithesis. Whose words will prevail

Prophesy not against Israel, and [o]drop not *thy word* against the house of Isaac. **17** [p]Therefore thus saith the LORD; [q]Thy wife shall be an harlot in the city, and thy sons and thy daughters shall fall by the sword, and thy land shall be divided by line; and thou shalt die in a polluted land: and Israel shall surely go into captivity forth of his land.

[o] Ezek. 21. 2; Mic. 2. 6.—[p] See Jer. 28. 12; 29. 21, 25, 31, 32.—[q] Isa. 13. 16; Lam. 5. 11; Hos. 4. 13; Zech. 14. 2.

can easily be imagined. **Prophesy not**—Compare verse 13. **Drop not**—That is, thy words (Mic. ii, 6, 11); a synonym of *prophesy*. **Isaac**—As in verse 9. **Therefore**—The attempt to silence a divinely commissioned prophet deserves severest punishment; and this Amos proceeds to announce in verse 17. **An harlot**—Now she is a lady of the palace, but the invader will dishonor her and compel her to live a life of shame. **In the city**—In public (Zech. xiv, 2; Isa. xiii, 16); compare the colloquial "street-walker." Such outrages were committed by the Assyrians, as we learn from the inscriptions; Ashur-nasir-pal boasts, "Their boys and maidens I dishonored" (*Records of the Past*, iii, p. 51). His children will be slain, and his land divided among new settlers (compare Mic. ii, 4; Jer. vi, 12; 2 Kings xvii, 24). **Line**—The measuring line. **Polluted land** ["land that is unclean"]—See Hos. ix, 3, on "Jehovah's land" and "unclean food." **Israel shall surely go into captivity** ["be led away captive"]—He repeats the very words which Amaziah had made the basis of his accusation.

The closing words of the historical section take us back to the message of the third vision, and thus they prepare the way for the fourth.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Basket of Summer Fruit, 1–3.

Under the figure of a basket filled with ripe fruit Jehovah shows the prophet that Israel is ripe for judg-

CHAPTER VIII.

THUS hath the Lord GOD shewed unto me: and behold a basket of summer fruit. **2** And he said, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A basket of summer fruit. Then said the LORD unto me, [s]The end is come upon my people of Israel; [b]I will not again pass by them any more. **3** And [c]the songs of the temple [1]shall be howlings in that day, saith

[s] Ezek. 7. 2.—[b] Chap. 7. 8.—[c] Chap. 5. 23.—[1] Heb. *shall howl.*

ment. The picture is chosen (1) because of the similarity in sound between the words translated "summer fruit"—Heb. *ḳayiṣ*—and "end"—Heb. *ḳēṣ;* (2) because of the similarity in the ideas of the two words. The opening formula is the same as in vii, 1, 4. **Basket**—The word occurs again only in Jer. v, 27 "cage"; it is a general term for any receptacle. **Summer fruit**—Ripe fruit, ready to be gathered in. On the question see remarks on vii, 8. The prophet having replied, Jehovah explains the vision. **The end is come**—It is close at hand; the time of mercy is past (vii, 8).

Verse 3 gives a brief and forceful description of the end. Slaughter and mourning will be everywhere. Harper, without sufficient reason, places verse 3 after verse 9. **Songs**—Expressions of joy and happiness (verse 10; v, 23; vi, 5). **Temple**—If this is the correct rendering the reference must be to the rejoicing accompanying the religious feasts (v, 23). The word may also mean "palace" (so margin R. V.), and the context favors this rendering. If so, comparison should be made with vi, 4, 5. The above is the common translation of the Hebrew. However, the original presents two peculiarities: (1) A literal translation is, "And the songs of the palace *shall howl*," or, *wail—songs* being the subject; but this is a strange construction. The sense is improved but little if *songs* is made the object, "They shall howl songs of the palace." (2) The feminine plural ending with

the Lord GOD: *there shall be* many dead bodies in every place; [d]they shall cast *them* forth [2]with silence.

4 Hear this, O ye that [e]swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of

[d] Chap. 6. 9, 10.—[2] Heb. *be silent.*—[e] Psa. 14. 4; Prov. 30. 14.—[3] Or, *month.*

the land to fail, 5 Saying, When will the [3]new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and [f]the sabbath, that we may [4]set forth wheat, [g]making the ephah small, and the shekel

[f] Neh. .13. 15, 16.—[4] Heb. *open.*—[g] Mic. 6. 10, 11.

the word *song* is unusual; ordinarily it has the masculine ending. To remove these peculiarities a slight emendation has been suggested, "The female singers of the palace shall howl" (v, 16), that is, for the dead. **In that day**—The day of the *end.*

3b is rendered more accurately in R. V., "The dead bodies shall be many; in every place shall they cast them forth with silence." The original is even more forceful: "Many the corpses! In every place they are cast forth! Hush!" The tenses in 3b are *prophetic* perfects; the prophet represents the calamity of the future as already present. **Dead bodies**—The avenger will do his worst; death and despair will be everywhere (vi, 9, 10). **They shall cast them forth**—Literally, *he shall cast them forth*—that is, Jehovah. He strikes the blow through the human agent, and dead bodies are scattered everywhere. The construction may be intended, however, to be understood as impersonal, "one shall cast forth"—they shall cast forth—they shall be cast forth (G.-K., 144d) From streets and houses the dead bodies are gathered, but there is no time for honorable burial; they are thrown anywhere. **With silence**—Literally, *hush.* An interjection, as in vi, 10, "Hold thy peace."

AN EXPLANATORY DISCOURSE, 4–14.

In the oral delivery this discourse may not have followed immediately upon the presentation of the fourth vision, but logically there is a close connection between viii, 1–3, and 4–14. In the vision Israel is pictured as ripe for judgment; in 4–6 the prophet expands this thought: they are ripe because they are utterly corrupt; their measure of iniquity is full and running over. As an illustration he singles out the conduct of the greedy and dishonest merchants. In punishment terrible judgments will fall (7). In 8–14 these are described under various figures.

4–7. *The greedy merchants of Israel.* **Hear this**—See on iii, 1. **Swallow up the needy**—Literally, *pant after* (ii, 7). Here also Jerome renders 'crush." The verb is explained in the next clause. **Even to make the poor of the land to fail**—Literally, and better, *and are for making the poor of the land to cease;* that is, they seek to make an end of them as free men and property holders. To accomplish this end various means might be employed, in this case commercial dishonesty. The construction is somewhat unusual; according to G.-K., 114p, the thought of the whole verse may be expressed as follows: "O ye that pant to make an end of the needy and of the poor of the land."

Verse 5 shows that the prophet thinks primarily of the greedy merchants (but compare ii, 7; Isa. v, 8–10; Mic. ii, 2). **New moon . . . sabbath**—See on Hos. ii, 11. **When will . . . be gone**—It appears from the present passage that on sacred days ordinary pursuits of life were discontinued; this the greedy merchants considered a foolish interruption of their profits. **Set forth**—Literally, *open up,* that is, for sale. In various ways they took advantage of their customers; they gave scant measure, charged exorbitant prices, "doctored" the scales, and adulterated the goods. **Ephah**—The measure in which they measured the grain for the buyer (see on Hos. iii, 2); this they made small, perhaps by putting a false bottom in it. **Shekel**—Before money was coined a weight was used for the weighing of gold and silver. Its value has been

great, and [5]falsifying the balances by deceit? 6 That we may buy the poor for [h]silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes; *yea*, and sell the refuse of the wheat? 7 The LORD hath sworn by [i]the excellency of Jacob, Surely [k]I will never forget any of their works. 8 [l]Shall not the land tremble for this, and every one mourn that dwelleth therein? and it

[5] Heb. *perverting the balances of deceit*, Hos. 12. 7.

[h] Chap. 2. 6.—[i] Chap. 6. 8.—[k] Hos. 8. 13; 9. 9.—[l] Hos. 4. 3.

variously estimated; the most commonly received estimate gives the value of a shekel of gold as approximately equivalent to $10.80; of silver, 60 cents (see on Hos. iii, 2). This weight they made heavier, so as to get more than the legitimate price. In 1890 Dr. Chaplin found, on the site of the ancient Samaria, a weight which is thought, from an inscription on it, to represent a quarter of a shekel. Its weight is greater than that of a legitimate quarter of a shekel; and W. R. Smith has suggested that it is one of the heavy shekels condemned by Amos. **Falsifying the balances by deceit**—R. V., "dealing falsely with balances of deceit"; literally, *perverting the balances of deceit*. They tampered with the scales in order to deceive the buyer, and thus to take advantage of him.

Verse 6 expresses the motive which caused the merchants to wish for the resumption of business; they sought to get under their control the poor and the needy. **Buy**—As slaves, when the poor found themselves unable to meet their financial obligations (Lev. xxv, 39). **For silver**—The money which the poor owed them. **A pair of shoes**—See on ii, 6. **Refuse**—Literally, *that which falls*, that is, through the sieve—the chaff. It is worthless, but they mix it with good grain and sell it.

Verse 6 is rejected by several modern commentators as being unnecessary and out of harmony with the context. Marti says, "The connection of 6a with 4, 5 is unintelligible; the rich corn merchants are not interested in buying the poor and needy, but rather in selling their grain and securing for it the highest price." However, the one does not exclude the other, and the objection cannot be considered conclusive. While 6b does not follow quite naturally upon 6a, it also fits in the prophet's thought.

7. The heartless greed and dishonesty has aroused the indignation of Jehovah and makes judgment inevitable. **Hath sworn**—See on iv, 2. **Excellency of Jacob**—Jehovah (vi, 8). The word translated "excellency" is used nowhere else in this sense, but a warrant for the translation is found in 1 Sam. xv, 29, where Jehovah is called "strength (literally, *splendor*) of Israel." The common meaning of the word is "pride" (vi, 8, R. V. margin; Hos. v, 5; vii, 10). If so here, the oath would be by the pride and arrogance of Israel. Jehovah sees this pride deeply ingrained in the very nature of the people; he knows it to be permanent and incurable, and for this reason he selects it in scorn as an object by which to swear. **Any of their works**—Of dishonesty and injustice. All will be remembered and punished (Hos. vii, 2).

8–10. *Figurative description of the impending judgment and of the resulting lamentation.* The description of the judgment is introduced by a rhetorical question, the answer to which is in the affirmative. Surely their conduct deserves the severest and most terrible retribution. **Shall not the land tremble**—In an earthquake. In iv, 11, Amos called attention to the terrors of a former earthquake; do they not deserve another similar visitation? **For this**—Or, *on account of this*—the wickedness and corruption described. **Mourn**—In terror, and over the destruction wrought. 8b may be translated as continuing the rhetorical question, "shall it not rise up wholly like the River, and shall it not be troubled and sink again, like the River of

shall rise up wholly as a flood; and it shall be cast out and drowned, [m]as *by* the flood of Egypt. **9** And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord GOD, [n]that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day: **10** And I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation; [o]and I will bring up sackcloth upon all loins, and baldness upon every head; [p]and I will make it as the mourning of an only *son*, and the end thereof as a bitter day.

11 Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but [q]of hearing the words of the LORD:

[m] Chap. 9. 5.—[n] Job 5. 14; Isa. 13. 10; 59. 9, 10; Jer. 15. 9; Mic. 3. 6.—[o] Isa. 15. 2, 3; Jer. 48. 37; Ezek. 7. 18; 27. 31.—[p] Jer. 6. 26; Zech. 12. 10.—[q] 1 Sam. 3. 1; Psa. 74. 9; Ezek. 7. 26.

Egypt?" Or, following the English translations, it may be understood as the reply to 8a. That which they deserve shall indeed come to pass. **It**—The land. **As a flood**—Better, R. V., "like the River." The last word, when in the singular, is used almost exclusively of the Nile. **Cast out**—R. V., "shall be troubled," by being driven hither and thither in restless convulsions (Isa. lvii, 20). The verb is omitted in LXX. and in the parallel passage (ix, 5), and may not be original. **Drowned**—Better, R. V., "sink again." **As by the flood of Egypt**—Better, R. V., "like the River of Egypt"—the Nile, when its waters subside after the inundation. The rise and fall of the Nile are perhaps not the most appropriate figures for an earthquake, since the latter causes sudden convulsions, while the rise and fall of the Nile are gradual.

Verse 9 adds a new feature to the terror of this *day of Jehovah* (see on Joel ii, 10, 30, 31). **Cause the sun to go down at noon**—The imagery is probably borrowed from an eclipse of the sun. Amos may have seen the eclipse of 763 B. C., which was observed as a total eclipse in Nineveh on June 15, and which must have been visible in Palestine as a "fairly large partial eclipse." **Go down**—Literally, *go in*. The sun appeared to go *into* the earth when it set. **Darken the earth**—By hiding the sun. **Clear day**—Literally, *day of light*—broad daylight.

10. Whether interpreted literally or figuratively verses 8, 9 speak of a terrible visitation of Jehovah, the result of which will be universal wailing and lamentation. **Feasts**—See on Hos. ii, 11. Under normal conditions these were occasions of rejoicing (v, 21–23; Isa. xxx, 29); in *that* day they will be seasons of mourning (v, 16, 17; viii, 3). **Songs**—Joyful songs (see on viii, 3). **Lamentation**—For the dead. The same word as in v, 1 (see there). **Sackcloth**—A symbol of mourning (see on Joel i, 8). **Baldness**—Artificial baldness was another sign of mourning (see on Mic. i, 16). **Of an only son**—The bitterest grief imaginable (Zech. xii, 10; Jer. vi, 26). **The end**—Of the mourning. **As a bitter day**—Time heals most wounds and makes most sorrows less intense; not so in this case—the end will be as bitter as the beginning or even worse.

11–14. *Some effects of the judgment.* In the agony and despair of the judgment people will hunger and thirst for the word of Jehovah, but they will not find it. **The days come**—Better, *are about to come* (see on ii, 13; compare iv, 2); "the days" is identical with "that day" (verse 9). **Famine ... thirst**—Calamities with which they were familiar (iv, 6–8); but this experience will be unique. **Hearing the words of Jehovah**—The ancient versions and some Hebrew manuscripts read the singular "word," and this is to be preferred (verse 12); it is the common expression for a communication from Jehovah (2 Kings iii, 12; Jer. xxvii, 18, etc.). The *word* which they seek is either the *word of instruction*—this they desire to know, and

12 And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find *it*. 13 In that day shall the fair virgins and young men faint for thirst. 14 They that [r]swear by [s]the sin of Samaria, and say, Thy god, O Dan, liveth; and, The [6]manner [t]of Beersheba liveth; even they shall fall, and never rise up again.

[r] Hos. 4. 15.—[s] Deut. 9. 21.—[6] Heb. *way*, see Acts 9. 2; 18, 25; 19, 9, 23; 24. 14.

[t] Chap. 5. 5.

they are willing to heed it, in order that they may escape further distress —or the *word of consolation*, which they need and for which they long in their distress.

The intensity of the people's yearning is depicted in verse 12. Far and wide they seek it, but in vain. **Wander** —Literally, *totter*, or, *reel* (iv, 8). Though exhausted, they continue, with uncertain steps, their search, hoping that their efforts may yet be rewarded. **From sea to sea**—Since the prophet is concerned with the Hebrew people exclusively (verse 14), this is best interpreted as meaning "from the Dead Sea to the Mediterranean," the southern and western limits of Israel (Joel ii, 20; Zech. xiv, 8; compare 2 Kings xiv, 25). **From the north even to the east**—Literally, *to the rising* (of the sun). This completes the circle. The Dead Sea is called also the *eastern* sea (Zech. xiv, 8). Though the four expressions are not exactly synonymous with "from north to south, from east to west," that is their meaning. In every direction do the people seek for relief, but in vain.

Verse 13 is thought by many to be a later interpolation, chiefly because it seems to speak of physical thirst, while its immediate context, 11, 12, speaks of spiritual famine and thirst. Others, thinking that the prophet has in mind throughout material famine and physical thirst, omit 11, 12 or parts of these verses. Harper omits only "for thirst" in verse 13; and thus brings 13 in harmony with 11, 12. It may be asked, however, whether it is necessary to establish complete harmony between verses 11, 12 and verse 13. May not 13 introduce a new thought? If an emendation is thought necessary that of Harper seems the most satisfactory; "for thirst" could easily have come in at a later time. **Fair virgins and young men**—The beauty and strength of the nation. Even youth, which ordinarily can endure severe strains, will be unable to stand up under this calamity. But if the strongest succumb what will become of the weak? **Thirst** —To be understood literally. It is mentioned rather than hunger because of the more intense suffering accompanying it. 14. **They that swear** —Must be the "fair virgins and young men" (verse 13; see on Hos. iv, 15). **Sin of Samaria**—The allusion is undoubtedly to the *calf* at Beth-el (see on Hos. viii, 5), which was the embodiment of Israel's guilt (Hos. x, 8). *Samaria*, the capital, stands for *Israel*, the people or the land. The fact that Amos nowhere else uses Samaria as equivalent to Israel is not sufficient reason for changing it into Beth-el; nor is it necessary to change the word translated "sin." Most modern commentators, however, read "god of Beth-el." The Israelites made their oaths by the calf of Beth-el rather than by Jehovah; and since men swear by that which they hold dearest, these oaths were evidence that the Israelites had transferred their affections to the *calf*. **Thy god . . . liveth**—R. V., "As thy god . . . liveth." The common formula used in swearing an oath. **Dan**—Where Jeroboam set up the other *calf* (1 Kings xii, 29). The city was located near the northern boundary of Israel, at the foot of Mount Hermon, near the head of the main source of the Jordan River. It is now called *Tel-el-Ḳadi*. Its deity also was the *calf*. **The manner of Beer-sheba liveth**—Better, R. V., "As the way of

CHAPTER IX.

I SAW the Lord standing upon the altar: and he said, Smite the [1]lintel of the door, that the posts

[1] Or, *chapiter*, or, *knop.*——[2] Or, *wound them.*

Beer-sheba liveth." "To swear by a *way*" has always impressed Bible students as a peculiar expression; hence *way* has been interpreted in the sense of *worship*, or, *manner*. But this does not relieve the difficulty. As a result many emendations have been proposed. It is doubtful, however, if any one of these is more satisfactory than the present text, which is not altogether unintelligible. The sanctuary at Beer-sheba was undoubtedly expected by the common people to abide forever; therefore the road leading to the sanctuary might be thought to remain always; consequently it would not be so very strange that the pilgrims passing over it should swear by it. Even to-day Arabs swear "by the sacred way to Mecca"; and Mitchell quotes Rückert's *Hariri*, i, 189, "By the pilgrimage and the height of Mina, where the pious host stone Satan." *Beer-sheba*—See on v, 5. All those who have thus forsaken Jehovah will be utterly destroyed (v, 2).

CHAPTER IX.

THE SMITTEN SANCTUARY, 1–6.

These verses contain an account of the fifth vision, followed by an exposition setting forth the inevitableness and completeness of the judgment. The prophet beholds the sanctuary crowded with worshipers, and Jehovah standing beside the altar; he hears the divine command to smite the sanctuary, so that it will fall upon the worshipers and crush them. If some should escape by accident they will meet their doom in other ways. Wherever they may seek a hiding place Jehovah will find them and blot them out. The threat is enforced, as in iv, 13; v, 8, 9, by a solemn description of the majesty and power of Jehovah. If the words were spoken

may shake: and [2][a]cut them in the head, all of them; and I will slay the last of them with the sword: [b]he that fleeth of them shall not flee

[a] Psa. 68. 21; Hab. 3. 13.——[b] Chap. 2. 14.

under the shadow of the sanctuary at Beth-el (vii, 13), this vision would be especially appropriate and impressive.

1. **I saw**—The other visions are introduced with "Jehovah showed unto me." **The Lord**—He is the central figure in this vision, not a symbolic object or act. **Standing**—As in vii, 7. A more accurate rendering would be *stationed*, since the word denotes a more formal attitude than is indicated by the simple *standing*. **Beside**—Literally, *upon* (Num. xxiii, 3, 6; 1 Kings xxi, 1). **Altar**—It is most natural to suppose that the prophet has in mind the altar at Beth-el, the chief sanctuary of the north, where he was delivering his message. **He said**—To whom? See on "publish ye" (iii, 9; compare iii, 13). **Lintel**—The Hebrew has the singular, which is used in a collective sense, therefore R. V. reads the plural, "capitals"; the ornaments on top of the columns which support the roof (Zeph. ii, 14; compare Exod. xxv, 31). A blow upon these capitals would cause the roof to fall, especially if the blow was severe enough to cause the foundations to tremble. **Posts**—Better, *thresholds*, since the word is used almost exclusively in the latter sense. *Threshold* is equivalent to *foundation*, and the clause indicates the force of the blow. **Cut** ["break"] **them**—The Hebrew underlying this translation is peculiar (G.-K., 61g). The pronoun (plural in Hebrew) is interpreted most naturally as referring back to "capitals" (singular in Hebrew). Such construction is unusual; it may be a construction according to the sense (G.-K., 135o), or the prophet may be thinking of the pieces made by the blow. Most commentators suspect a corruption of the text. **All of them**—The worshipers gathered within the sanctuary. **The last of them**—Or, *the residue of them*,

away, and he that escapeth of them shall not be delivered. 2 [c]Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them; [d]though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down: 3 And though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence; and though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command the serpent, and he shall bite them: 4 And though they go into captivity before their enemies, [e]thence will I command the sword, and it shall slay them: and [f]I will set mine eyes

[c] Psa. 139. 8, etc.——[d] Job 20. 6; Jer. 51. 53; Obad. 4.

[e] Lev. 26. 33; Deut. 28. 65; Ezek. 5. 12. ——[f] Lev. 17. 10; Jer. 44. 11.

that is, any who may escape from the sanctuary; they shall fall subsequently by the sword.

For the rest of verse 1 R. V. reads, perhaps less literally than A. V., "there shall not one of them flee away, and there shall not one of them escape." Not from the smitten sanctuary, for both the preceding clause and verse 2 imply that some will escape from it, but from Jehovah (v, 19). If any succeed in escaping from the ruins Jehovah will follow them, until he overtakes them and somehow causes their destruction.

This thought is expanded in 2–4, with which may be compared Psa. cxxxix. The prophet enumerates the places which might be expected to provide safe hiding places, but Jehovah will penetrate all. **Hell**—Better, R. V., "Sheol"; the place of the departed (Hos. xiii, 14; Hab. ii, 5; see article "Sheol" in Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible*). Sheol was thought to be located in the center of the earth (Eph. iv, 9). **Heaven**—The dwelling place of God on high. The two represent the lowest depth and the highest height (Isa. vii, 11; Job xi, 8); both are inaccessible to living men. If somehow the survivors should succeed in reaching the places Jehovah's wrath will pursue them.

Verse 3 mentions two other ordinarily inaccessible places, which in this instance will offer no safety. **Top of Carmel**—See on i, 2. Mount Carmel would be a promising hiding place, because (1) it was rich in natural caves—there are said to be about two thousand "close together and so serpentine as to make the discovery of a fugitive entirely impossible"; (2) its top was thickly wooded. Strabo relates (xvi, 2, 28) that in the first century A. D. the forests of Carmel were favorite hiding places of robbers. If hunted from Mount Carmel they might seek refuge in the neighboring Mediterranean, but even the deep sea bottom will offer no shelter. **Serpent**—This is not an ordinary marine serpent, such as are found in tropical climates in the sea —not in the Mediterranean—but a mythological sea monster (Gen. i, 21; compare Isa. xxvii, 1), called also *Leviathan* (Job xli, 1); it is probably to be connected with the Babylonian *Tiamat*. With no other agent near, this serpent will be called upon to execute judgment. **Go into captivity**—The enemy may be willing to spare their lives; not so Jehovah. He has decreed their utter destruction. **Set mine eyes upon**—An expression used frequently in a good sense, equivalent to keep watch over (Gen. xliv, 21; Jer. xxiv, 6); here in a bad sense, to look upon in anger. **For evil**—In order to destroy (compare Jer. xxi, 10; Ezek. xv, 7).

5, 6. The people might think the prophet mad; hence he proceeds to disabuse their minds by informing them that it is Jehovah who makes the threats. Once more he depicts the divine majesty and omnipotence. The verses are similar in tone to iv, 13; v, 8, 9, and they serve the same purpose (see comments on those verses and Introduction, pp. 217ff.). They certainly add force to the preceding threats, and Harper is hardly justified in saying, "The proposed logical connection of this verse (5) with the

upon them for evil, and not for good. 5 And the Lord GOD of hosts *is* he that toucheth the land, and it shall [g]melt, [h]and all that dwell therein shall mourn: and it shall rise up wholly like a flood; and shall be drowned, as *by* the flood of Egypt. 6 *It is* he that buildeth his [3] [4] [i]stories in the heaven, and hath founded his [5]troop in the earth; he that [k]calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: [l]The LORD *is* his name. 7 *Are* ye not as children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel? saith the LORD. Have not I brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt? and the [m]Philistines from [n]Caphtor, and the Syrians from [o]Kir? 8 Behold, [p]the eyes of

[g] Mic. 1. 4.——[h] Chap. 8. 8.——[3] Or, *spheres.*——[4] Heb. *ascensions.*——[i] Psa. 104. 3, 13.——[5] Or, *bundle.*

[k] Chap. 5. 8.——[l] Chap. 4. 13.——[m] Jer. 47. 4.——[n] Deut. 2. 23; Jer. 47. 4.——[o] Chap. 1. 5.——[p] Verse 4.

preceding, 'God is able to bring such punishment because he is the almighty one,' is unnatural and far-fetched." **The Lord Jehovah of hosts** —Compare iv, 13. **Toucheth the land** —In a thunderstorm. **Melt**—See on Mic. i, 4; Nah. i, 5. **Mourn**—See on i, 2. 5b describes an earthquake; see on viii, 8b, of which it is an almost *verbatim* repetition. **Stories**—R. V., "chambers"; literally, *upper chambers;* the dwelling place of Jehovah above the "firmament" (Psa. civ, 3, 13). **Troop**—Better, R. V., "vault." The "firmament" of Gen. i, 6, which, to the eye ignorant of the truths of astronomy, seems to rest as a huge cupola upon the earth (Job xxvi, 11). **Calleth for the waters . . . poureth them out**—See on v, 8. **Jehovah**—LXX. adds "of hosts" (compare iv, 13).

JEHOVAH NOT A RESPECTER OF PERSONS, 7–10.

Once before (iii, 1, 2) Amos attempted to correct the misapprehension that Jehovah was partial to Israel, and that his choice of the nation could be regarded as a guarantee of its safety (see introductory remarks on iii, 1–iv, 3). A false confidence, based upon this misapprehension, might destroy the effect of the message in ix, 1–6. To avoid this the prophet emphasizes once more the truth that Jehovah is interested in all the nations of the earth, and that any special favors granted to the Israelites must have their justification in the latter's moral superiority. Since they have shown themselves a "sinful kingdom" they are unworthy of special favors; on the contrary, Jehovah is compelled to proceed against them in judgment. Nevertheless, he will "not utterly" destroy them; a faithful remnant will be preserved.

7. The universality of Jehovah's government the prophet illustrates from the past history of several representative nations. The divine hand could be seen in the deliverance of Israel from Egypt (ii, 9, 10); but it was not less visible in the movements of the other peoples. **Children of the Ethiopians**—Hebrew, "of the Cushites." *Cush* was a district in Africa, immediately south of Upper Egypt (see on Zeph. ii, 12; Nah. iii, 9). The inhabitants of this region, despised, perhaps, also on account of their color (Jer. xiii, 23), are, in a sense, as dear to Jehovah as Israel. **Philistines**—See on Joel iii, 4 (compare Amos i, 6–8). The reference to the Philistines would be startling. Could Jehovah care for Israel's enemies? **Caphtor**—Mentioned also in other passages as the original home of the Philistines (Deut. ii, 23; Jer. xlvii, 4). Opinions still differ concerning the identification of Caphtor. Of the three most important locations suggested, the coast of the Nile Delta, the south coast of Asia Minor, and the island of Crete, the last named is the most probable, but it is quite possible that the other districts also were occupied, at some period, by people of the same race. In favor of this identification is the name *Cherethites,* applied to the Philistines in 1 Sam. xxx, 14 (compare Zeph. ii, 5), because this name contains the same consonants

the Lord GOD *are* upon the sinful kingdom, and I [q]will destroy it from off the face of the earth; saving that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the LORD. **9** For, lo, I will command, and I will [6]sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as *corn* is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least [7]grain fall upon the earth. **10** All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword, [r]which say, The evil shall not overtake nor prevent us.

[q] Jer. 30. 11; 31. 35, 36; Obad. 16, 17.

[6] Heb. *cause to move.*—[7] Heb. *stone.*—[r] Chap. 6. 3.

as the word *Crete.* **Kir**—See on i, 5.

After shattering the false hope of the people Amos repeats, in his own words, the threat of 1–6, but with an essential modification; he now holds out hope to a remnant, whereas before he announced complete annihilation. **The eyes . . . are upon**—Or, *against* (see verse 4; compare Psa. xxxiv, 16). **The sinful kingdom**—Jehovah must punish every sinful kingdom, but the use of the article indicates that the prophet has in mind one particular nation, namely, Israel. On account of its wickedness it must be wiped from the face of the earth. **Saving that I will not utterly destroy**—As a kingdom and people Israel had forfeited the divine favor, but there always had been (1 Kings xix, 18) and there still was within the nation a "holy seed," a remnant that continued faithful to Jehovah, out of which he might form a new people and kingdom of God. The divine righteousness and justice demanded the salvation of this remnant (compare on v, 15). **House of Jacob**—Not Judah, as distinguished from Israel, or the whole nation, as distinguished from the northern kingdom, but a poetic variant for "house of Israel" (verse 9; v, 3, 4, 25, etc.), and "house of Joseph" (v, 6), identical with "the sinful kingdom."

Verses 9, 10 carry further the thought of 8b. The judgment has a disciplinary purpose, to separate the pure from the corrupt; the pure will be preserved, the corrupt destroyed. This teaching is in accord with the philosophical conceptions of the times; the prophet does not consider the possibility of a righteous man being cut off, while an ungodly person might escape. **I will**—Better, *I am about to* (see on ii, 13). **Command**—The divine executioner (vi, 14). **Sift**—R. V. margin, "cause to move to and fro," as the grain in the sieve is shaken back and forth. **House of Israel**—All, good and bad alike. **Among all nations**—Among which the Israelites were to be scattered in exile. That experience would test the loyalty of the people, just as the sifting process tests the character of the grain. **Grain** ["kernel"]—Literally, *pebble.* In view of the figure of the sieve it seems best to interpret the word figuratively of the solid, sound grain of corn. Not even the smallest sound kernel will be allowed to fall to the ground and be trampled under foot; carefully it will be preserved, to be used according to the wishes of the husbandman. Thus the righteous kernel among the exiles will be preserved for God's own use; only the godless chaff will perish. Some interpret the word literally, *pebble,* or *little stone.* The pebbles are kept in the sieve while the good grain is allowed to fall through, to be gathered and preserved; so the wicked will be retained in exile, while the pious will be restored. In either case the thought is that the fate of the righteous will not be the same as that of the wicked; the former will be preserved for a brighter future. **The sinners**—Not the righteous, who have been separated by the sifting process. **By the sword**—Of the enemy. A figure of violent death, whatever the means. **The evil shall not overtake nor prevent us**—For the second verb, now obsolete in the sense required here, R. V. reads "meet us." This is

11 [s]In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and [s]close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old, 12 [t]That they may possess the remnant of [u]Edom, and of all the heathen, [v]which are called by my name, saith

[s] Acts 15. 16, 17.——[s] Heb. *hedge*, or, *wall*.——[t] Obad. 19.

[u] Num. 24. 18.——[v] Heb. *upon whom my name is called*.

undoubtedly the sense of the passage but to justify this translation two slight changes in the verb forms may be necessary. **Evil**—Misfortune or calamity. The prophet has in mind especially the self-secure sinners who, relying upon their membership in the chosen race (verse 7; iii, 2), or upon their religious zeal (v, 21ff.), fancy that the judgment cannot touch them (vi, 3; compare Mic. iii, 11; Isa. v, 19).

THE EPILOGUE—PROMISES OF A BRIGHTER FUTURE, 11–15.

In verse 9 the prophet promises the preservation of a remnant, in verse 10 the destruction of the wicked. Nothing more need be said about the latter, for they are annihilated; but what will become of the former? It will be exalted to glory and honor. This exaltation is the subject of 11–15. Like the other prophets, our author is convinced that the remnant will be the nucleus of the new kingdom of God, which will be ruled by the restored dynasty of David (11); its boundaries will extend to the limits of the empire of David (12); famine and want will be no more, for the soil will be blessed with extraordinary fertility (13); the exiles scattered abroad will be restored and the waste cities will be rebuilt (14); and in prosperity and felicity the people will be established in their own land forever (15).

11. **In that day**—When the judgment has fallen, the sinners have been destroyed, and a righteous nucleus has been saved. **Tabernacle of David**—The word, also translated "hut," is used of a temporary structure of boughs, or the reed hut of soldiers in the field (2 Sam. xi, 11; Isa. i, 8); it is descriptive here, by way of contrast, of the *house* of David (1 Kings xii, 19, 20; Zech. xii, 7, 8; compare 2 Sam. vii, 11, 16), the royal dynasty, which at *that* time will be in dire straits, but which will be raised again to honor from its humiliation (see further Introduction, p. 216). **Fallen**—Into ruin. It is no longer a desirable hut (compare Isa. xi, 1). In the next three clauses the figure of a broken wall is substituted. **Breaches**—Made by the enemy; a figure of damages inflicted upon the dynasty of David, by which it is rendered defenseless. **His ruins**—David's. R. V., "its," that is, of the tabernacle. In either case the sense remains the same. **Build**—Or, *rebuild*. **It**—The tabernacle. **As in the days of old**—During the splendid reign of David. Once more the dynasty will become a house stately and majestic.

12. The restoration of the dynasty is needed in order that the splendor of the kingdom may be reëstablished. The new kingdom will be harassed no longer by its neighbors, but will triumph over all. **Remnant of Edom**—All that may be left of Edom after the conquest. Edom is singled out on account of the long-continued hostility between Israel and Edom (i, 12; Obad. 18–21; Joel iii, 19; Psa. cxxxvii, 7). **All the heathen**—Better, R. V., "nations." **Which are** (better, R. V. margin, "were") **called by my name**—Literally, *over which my name was called*. The meaning of the expression may be gathered from 2 Sam. xii, 28. Joab, while besieging Rabbah of the Ammonites, invited David to come and take the city, "lest I take the city and *my name be called over it*," that is, lest I get the credit for the capture. The nations are those conquered by David, for whose conquest he gave the credit and glory to Jehovah. The thought of verse 12 is

the LORD that doeth this. 13 Behold, [x]the days come, saith the LORD, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that [10][c]soweth seed; [y]and the mountains shall drop [11]sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. 14 [z]And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and [a]they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit *them*; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. 15 And I will plant them upon their land, and [b]they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the LORD thy God.

[x] Lev. 26. 5.—[10] Heb. *draweth forth.*—[y] Joel 3. 18.—[11] Or, *new wine.*—[z] Jer. 30. 3.

[a] Isa. 61. 4; 65. 21; Ezek. 36. 33–36.—[b] Isa. 60. 21; Jer. 32. 41; Ezek. 34. 28; Joel. 3. 20.

evidently that the territory of the new kingdom is to be extended as far as during the reign of David (1 Kings iv, 21). **That doeth this**—The fact that Jehovah is interested in it assures its fulfillment (Jer. xxxiii, 2). For a free New Testament application of the verse see Acts xv, 16–18.

13–15. The outward extension of the territory will be followed by internal peace and prosperity. Verse 13 promises extreme fertility of the soil (see on Hos. ii, 20, 21; compare Joel ii, 22ff.; Lev. xxvi, 5). The translations of A. V. and R. V. are not quite accurate. Literally the verse reads, "Behold, the days are about to come, saith Jehovah, that the plowman and the reaper shall touch each other, as well as the treader of grapes and the sower of seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt." This rendering leaves it undecided whether the plowman is to overtake the reaper and the treader of grapes the sower, or the reaper the plowman and the sower the treader of grapes. Undoubtedly the latter is the thought. The ground will be so fertile that the plowman has hardly completed the work of plowing and sowing when the grain is ready for harvest, and the vintage will be so plentiful that it will not be completed when the time for plowing comes around again. Ordinarily the plowing in Palestine takes place in October, the sowing in November, the barley and wheat harvest in April and May, the vintage in August and September. **Treader of grapes**—The grapes were thrown into the winepress, where, in ancient times—and even now in some cases—they were pressed with the feet (for illustrations see Van Lennep, *Bible Lands*, p. 118; compare Joel ii, 24). For 13b see Joel iii, 18. **Melt**—The vintage will be so bountiful that it will seem as if the hills themselves were being dissolved into streams of wine.

14. To this fertile soil the exiles will be brought back, there to live in prosperity and happiness. **Bring again the captivity of my people**—See on Hos. vi, 11, and p. 133. **Build the waste cities**—Destroyed by the invader (iii, 15; v, 11; compare Jer. xxxiii, 10; Isa. liv, 3). **Inhabit**—Compare the threat in v, 11. **Plant vineyards, . . . drink the wine**—Compare iv, 9; v, 11; for a similar promise see Isa. lxv, 21; Ezek. xxviii 26. **Make gardens, . . . eat the fruit**—They will be permitted to enjoy the fruit of their labor (compare iv, 9).

15. The enjoyment of these blessings will be forever. **I will plant them**—A picture of firm and permanent establishment. **Their land**—The promise given to Abraham (Gen. xii, 7) is transferred to the *remnant*. Never again will they be disturbed in their possessions. **Thy God**—The pronoun is meant emphatically (see on Hos. ii, 1, 23).

The nonfulfillment of the Messianic promises in ix, 11–15 (see pp. 209, 210) must be interpreted in the light of what is said at the close of the comments on Mic. iv, 5 and v, 15. On the authorship of ix, 8–15, see Introduction, p. 215ff.

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF OBADIAH.

The Person of the Prophet.

The Book of Obadiah, with its twenty-one verses, is the shortest book in the Old Testament. Of the personal history of its author nothing is known. Obadiah seems to have been a very common name among the Hebrews, for it occurs very frequently in the Old Testament. The best-known person bearing the name is the minister of Ahab, who offered protection to the prophets of Jehovah (1 Kings xviii). Delitzsch thinks that the prophet may be identical with the Obadiah mentioned in 2 Chron. xvii, 7, as being sent by Jehoshaphat to teach in the cities of Judah, but this identification is, to say the least, exceedingly doubtful.

It is quite probable that the author was a native of Judah, for all his interest seems to be centered in the south. The suggestion has been made, though without sufficient reason, that Obadiah is not the real name of the author, and that, the author being unknown, the name was placed at the head of the oracle because of its meaning, *worshiper of Jehovah,* or —with a slight emendation—*servant of Jehovah.* The prophet may have lived in exile (see on verse 20).

The Date of the Prophecy.

The prophecy of Obadiah has been dated very early and very late. Of recent writers Kirkpatrick assigns it to the ninth century; Cornill and others, to the fifth; Strack, after 587; Cheyne, in *Founders of Old Testament Criticism,* dates 15-21 about 350; in *Encyclopædia Biblica,* article "Obadiah,"

he is content to say, "It (15-21) must have been later than 588, but not so late as 312," which implies that, in his opinion, the book did not reach its present form until the late postexilic period. Marti makes the date of the latter part as late as the second century, while he assigns the earlier portion to the period of Malachi.

In the case of Obadiah the date of the book cannot be considered apart from its unity. Concerning these two points four distinct views have been and are still advocated: 1. The book is a unity and preëxilic. 2. It is a unity and exilic or postexilic. 3. It consists of two portions, both postexilic. 4. It consists of an early, preëxilic, and a late, postexilic, portion.

Lack of space prevents a detailed discussion of the different theories; and it may be well to pass immediately to a consideration of the evidence upon which any conclusion must be based. This evidence is chiefly internal and may be considered under three heads: 1. The position of the book in the series of Minor Prophets. 2. The historical references in 11-14. 3. The literary parallels with Old Testament literature, especially the resemblances between 1-9 and Jer. xlix, 7-22.

1. *The Position of the Book.*—In the Hebrew as in the English Bible the Book of Obadiah occupies fourth place; in LXX., fifth, the order there being Hosea, Amos, Micah, Joel, Obadiah. This place near the head of the list is thought by some to constitute an argument in favor of the early date of Obadiah. But the position of a book, though it may serve as a starting point for investigation, is by no means conclusive evidence; and its testimony cannot stand if strong contradictory evidence is discovered. Our further study will show whether such evidence is found in this book. Here it may be sufficient to say that the position of Obadiah may, perhaps, be due to other than chronological reasons. The collector or collectors of the Minor Prophets may have placed the book between Amos and Jonah because they regarded it "an expan-

sion of the short prediction against Edom" which occurs at the close of the prophecy of Amos (ix, 12), and because they saw in Jonah an illustration of Obad. 1, "an ambassador is sent among the nations."

2. *The Historical References in 11-14.*—Verses 11-14 presuppose a capture and devastation of Jerusalem. If the time of this disaster can be determined the earliest possible date of these verses is fixed. The Old Testament records four occasions when the southern capital fell into the hands of invaders; and it is very probable that one of these is in the mind of the prophet. 1. Jerusalem was taken by Shishak of Egypt during the reign of Rehoboam (1 Kings xiv, 25, 26; 2 Chron. xii, 1-12); but at that time Edom was subject to Judah, and could not have committed the crimes described here; therefore this capture is excluded. 2. The city was sacked again by the Philistines and Arabians during the reign of Jehoram (2 Chron. xxi, 16, 17). This is the occasion favored by those who believe in the prëxilic date of Obadiah. It is open to question, however, whether that calamity was serious enough to justify the strong and vigorous language of the prophet. 3. The wall of the city was broken down by Jehoash of Israel (2 Kings xiv, 8-14; 2 Chron. xxv, 17-24). This disaster cannot be meant, because the Israelites could not be called *strangers* and *foreigners* (verse 11). 4. Jerusalem was taken by Nebuchadnezzar in 597, and again in 586, when the city was plundered and destroyed (2 Kings xxiv, 10ff.; 2 Chron. xxxvi, 9ff.). For the reasons given 1 and 3 seem to be out of the question; hence the choice must be between 2 and 4, but, as already indicated, the description of Obadiah seems to exclude also 2. No events such as are alluded to by Obadiah took place, so far as is known, in the days of Jehoram, or in connection with any of the occupations of the city recorded except the one in 586. A comparison of 11-14 with the passages mentioned will readily show the truth of this statement.

The prophecy, then, should be understood as a denunciation

of Edom's hostility during the crisis which resulted in the downfall of the kingdom of Judah. True, the historical books do not name the Edomites as taking an active part in the destruction of Jerusalem, but the Old Testament asserts again and again that the Edomites were bitter enemies of Israel; and it is evident from other allusions in exilic and postexilic writings that during the closing days of Judah's national existence the old hostile spirit revived. In Lamentations the poet bids the daughter of Edom to rejoice and be glad over the fall of Judah; but he immediately adds a threat of vengeance (iv, 21); Ezekiel also announces the doom of Edom (xxv, 12-14; xxxv, 1-15); and in Psa. cxxxvii the poet recalls with indignation the malice of the Edomites: "Remember, O Jehovah, against the children of Edom the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof." This spirit of hostility the prophet condemns in 11-14. Well has it been said that the curse upon Edom is the "one implication which breaks forth from the Lamentations of Jeremiah; it is the culmination of the fierce threats of Ezekiel; it is the whole purpose of the short, sharp cry of Obadiah; it is the bitterest drop in the sad recollections of the Israelite captive by the waters of Babylon; and the one warlike strain of the evangelical prophet is inspired by the hope that the divine conqueror would come knee-deep in Idumæan blood."

The conclusion that the allusion is to the destruction of Jerusalem does not fully determine the date of the prophecy. Before that is done another question demands consideration, whether Obadiah describes an historical event of the past or present, or whether he is projected into the future and enabled, through divine inspiration, to speak of things still future as if they were present or had already passed. Pusey argues very emphatically for the second view, but his arguments are not convincing, for they are based upon an artificial, unscriptural conception of inspiration and prophecy. The language, the context, analogy with other prophetic books,

and other considerations combine to make it more than probable that Obadiah is commissioned to announce judgment upon Edom for wrongdoings with which he has become familiar during his own lifetime. The statement of Pusey that the events to which the prophet alludes could not be a thing of the past at the time of the prophet's writing, "because God does not warn men against sins already committed," rests upon a misapprehension of the purpose of the book. The prophecy is not so much a *warning* as an *announcement of judgment;* its purpose is not so much to prevent new outbreaks as to condemn outrages already committed, though the former is also kept in mind (12-14). A due regard for this purpose of the prophecy causes the objection of Pusey to lose its entire force; and yet it may be true that Obadiah, speaking in the midst of the confusion subsequent to the fall of the city, hoped to prevent, by his message, further excesses of Edom.

The historical references of 11-14, therefore, make it highly probable that the prophecy in its present form comes from a period subsequent to the fall of Jerusalem in 586.

3. *The Literary Parallels.*—No one can read Obad. 1-9 and Jer. xlix, 7-22, without feeling that the marked resemblances between the two passages cannot be mere coincidence. Hence they must be explained in one of three ways: either Obadiah borrowed from Jeremiah, or Jeremiah borrowed from Obadiah, or both utilized for their own purposes an older prophecy. A careful examination of the resemblances as well as of the differences between the two passages has satisfied practically all scholars that, on the whole, Obadiah presents the more original form of the oracle. This conclusion is based both upon the linguistic features and upon the logical connection. Practical unanimity on this point would seem to exclude the first alternative and favor the second, that Jeremiah adopted the words of Obadiah. This inference would receive additional justification from the fact that Jeremiah does, at times, appropriate expressions of earlier prophets (compare, for example,

Jer. xlviii, 29, 30, with Isa. xvi, 6; Jeremiah xlix, 27, with Amos i, 4). Nevertheless, this view is not without difficulties. 1. In a few places (see comments) the originality seems to be with Jeremiah, which would favor the first alternative, unless it is supposed that the text of Obadiah suffered after Jeremiah had embodied the original words of Obadiah in his own prophecy. 2. A more serious objection is the fact that Jer. xlix, 12, "they to whom it pertained not to drink of the cup shall assuredly drink," seems to imply that judgment upon the Jews, that is, the destruction of Jerusalem, is still in the future. If so, Jeremiah must have delivered his prophecy before the destruction of the city, which excludes the possibility of his borrowing from an oracle delivered after the fall of Jerusalem (see above). We are driven, then, to the third alternative, that both passages are dependent upon an older utterance. It is worthy of note that the similarity of Jer. xlix, 7-22, extends only to Obad. 1-9; and it would seem peculiar that Jeremiah, with the whole of Obadiah before him, should confine himself to the first nine verses, when the rest contains much that would have suited his purposes admirably. The differences between Obad. 16 and Jer. xlix, 12, are so great that in this case independence seems not improbable; if, however, the resemblances between the two verses should be thought to warrant the conclusion that one must be dependent on the other, it should be borne in mind that, if Jeremiah uttered his oracle about twenty years before Obadiah's appearance, the latter may have been influenced by Jeremiah's words, though for the whole prophecy dependence of Obadiah upon Jeremiah seems excluded.

The most satisfactory explanation of the parallels between Jer. xlix, 7-22, and Obad. 1-9 seems to be—though it is readily admitted that it is only an hypothesis—that both prophets derived the elements common to them from an earlier prophecy, which Obadiah incorporated with few alterations, while Jeremiah treated it with greater freedom, and that Obadiah was familiar not only with the original oracle but also with the

utterance of Jeremiah dependent upon the same. On the whole, the earlier prophecy would be the same as Obad. 1-9, which contains no allusions to the destruction of Jerusalem in 586. This older utterance the prophet appropriated after the fall of the city and expanded it in 10-21, imitating to some extent the language of the earlier portion.

Some recent commentators who deny xlix, 7-22, to Jeremiah and bring the section down to a late date deny that any portion of Obadiah is preëxilic; but the reasons advanced against the authenticity of Jer. xlix, 7-22, are not conclusive, and the above interpretation seems the most satisfactory.

The date and occasion of the earlier prophecy cannot be fixed with certainty. Ewald supposed it to have been spoken when Elath was restored to the Edomites (2 Kings xvi, 6; margin R. V.), while others place it in the days of Jehoram (2 Kings viii, 20-22; 2 Chron. xxi, 8-10); but see on verse 1. Since it seems quite probable that the book contains two separate sections, it must remain undecided whether Obadiah is the name of the author of the earlier utterance, or of the writer who supplemented this and gave the book its present form, or of both prophets.

With Joel also Obadiah shows resemblances; in some instances (compare Joel ii, 32, with Obad. 17) it seems beyond question that Joel is the borrower; Obadiah, therefore, must have preceded Joel.

The *terminus a quo,* then, of the prophecy in its present form is 586 B. C. How much farther down it is necessary to go is somewhat uncertain. On this point Selbie, a careful and competent investigator, says: "It appears upon the whole most probable that not only the exile but also the return belong to the past. Note that there is no prediction of the rebuilding and repopulation of the capital, Jerusalem. The expressions in the closing verses are best satisfied by a date such as Nowack postulates for 1-14 (about 432 B. C.), or, perhaps preferably, later still. It is unfortunate that the text and the meaning of these verses are so doubtful." This is the view of several

very prominent commentators; on the other hand, there are other scholars, equally competent, who believe it unnecessary to go down so far. There is nothing in 15-21 that presupposes the return from exile. In fact, everything—the hopes of restoration, of the destruction of Edom, and of the establishment of the kingdom of God—points to the period before the restoration. On the whole, therefore, the most probable date would seem to be one soon after 586 B. C.

A full discussion of the more complicated theories of Wellhausen, Nowack, and others may be found in Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible,* article "Obadiah"; compare also Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament.*

The Book of the Prophet.

1. *Teaching.*—The prophet seems to have a twofold purpose: 1. To announce judgment upon Edom. 2. By the announcement of the speedy overthrow of this hated enemy to bring comfort and hope to the cruelly wronged people of God. This twofold aim is easily seen in the contents of the book: verses 1-16 deal with the judgment upon Edom, verses 17-21 with the restoration of the exiles.

In setting forth his convictions the prophet, directly or indirectly, gives expression to several truths prominent in all prophetic books. The more important of these are: 1. The special interest of Jehovah in Israel. Temporarily he may permit its enemies to triumph, but in the end he must vindicate himself and his people. 2. Obadiah shares with other prophets the hope for the establishment of a new kingdom of God, centering in Mount Zion and Jerusalem. 3. Holiness will be the chief characteristic of the new kingdom. 4. There is no direct reference to a Messianic king; "the kingdom shall be Jehovah's." Compare, however, "saviours shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau"; in a certain sense these *saviours* are representatives of Jehovah like the *Messianic king* of other prophetic books. 5. Obadiah sees no

conversion, only disaster for the nations outside of Israel (16-18).

2. *Contents.*—Following the brief title the prophet announces his theme: He is charged with heavy tidings against Edom. An ambassador is gone forth from Edom to summon the surrounding nations to war against Judah (1); but Jehovah will thwart the scheme; the doom of Edom is decreed (2). Though she thinks herself secure in her lofty rock-hewn dwellings, though she may rise like an eagle and build her nest among the stars, Jehovah will bring her down and humble her (3, 4). The destruction will be complete; even the most securely hidden treasures will be removed (5, 6). The nations with which she sought alliances will prove treacherous; her own wise men and men of war will be cut off (7-9).

The judgment will fall because Edom has done violence to Jacob in the day of Jerusalem's calamity (10, 11). The prophet, either in reality or imagination, sees the Edomites rejoicing in their inhumanities, and bids them emphatically to desist from cruel looks and words (12), from overt acts of spoliation (13), and from cutting off the fugitives at the crossways, and delivering to the enemies "those of his that remain in the day of distress" (14).

From the description of the crimes the prophet turns once more to the retribution. The Edomites are to be cut off forever; and though the judgment will fall upon all nations the Edomites will suffer most (15, 16).

The announcement of doom upon its enemies is followed by a promise of restoration to Israel. A remnant will escape in Mount Zion (17); the redeemed of the house of Jacob and of the house of Joseph will be used by God to bring destruction upon the house of Esau (18). Edom destroyed, the territory of the purified remnant will be extended in every direction (19, 20). "Saviours" will arise in Zion, whose sway will extend over the Mount of Esau, and over all will be established the rule of Jehovah (21).

3. *Outline.*—

INTRODUCTION—EDOM'S HOSTILE PURPOSES AGAINST JUDAH....Verse 1
I. THE UTTER DESTRUCTION OF EDOM.....2-16
1. Announcement of the judgment.....2-9
(1) Inability of Edom's natural defenses to save her 2-4
(2) Completeness of the destruction.....5, 6
(3) Treachery of her allies.....7
(4) Failure of Edom's wisdom and might.....8, 9
2. Causes of the judgment.....10-14
(1) The unbrotherly conduct of Edom toward Judah 10, 11
(2) Warning to desist from this conduct....12-14
3. The terrors of the day of Jehovah.....15, 16
II. THE EXALTATION OF THE JEWS.....17-21
1. Restoration of a remnant.....17
2. Conquest of Edom and other surrounding nations..18-20
3. Jehovah's universal sway.....21

OBADIAH.

THE vision of Obadiah. Thus saith the Lord GOD [a]concerning Edom; [b]We have heard a rumor from the LORD, and an ambassador

[a] Isa. 21. 11; 34. 5; Ezek. 25. 12–14; Joel 3. 19; Mal. 1. 3.—[b] Jer. 49. 14, etc.

THE UTTER DESTRUCTION OF EDOM, 1–16.

Edom's hostility against Judah has become so bitter that Jehovah can no longer endure the ill treatment of his people; he therefore decrees the downfall of the house of Esau (1, 2). Nothing can save; natural defenses, allies, men of wisdom and might will be unable to avert the doom (3–9). The measure of Edom's guilt was filled to the brim at the time of Jerusalem's calamity (10–14). The day of Jehovah will be a day of terror to all nations, but especially to the people of Edom (15, 16).

The Announcement of the judgment, 1–9.

1. The prophecy has two titles: (1) "The vision of Obadiah"; (2) "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah concerning Edom" (compare Nah. i, 1). The first is the title of the whole book, supplied either by the prophet himself or, what seems more probable, by the collector of the Minor Prophets. The second, which is intimately connected with what follows, contains the opening words of the prophet's denunciation of Edom, which serve at the same time as an introduction to the quotation from the more ancient oracle (see p. 291), the quotation itself beginning with "We have heard." The first title gives only the name of the author, and this is all we know concerning him (see on verse 20). **Vision**—The use of this word, like that of the verb *to see*, goes back to the period when the ecstatic vision was a common method of receiving the divine truth. It signifies properly that which appears before the mental eye of the prophet during a trance; but in the greater part of the Old Testament the word is used in a wider sense of all prophetic perception of divine truth, whatever the process. Here, as in other places, it is used in a still wider sense, as the heading of an entire prophetic book (Isa. i, 1; ii, 1; Nah. i, 1; compare 1 Chron. xxi, 9). **Obadiah**—See Introduction, p. 286. **Thus saith the Lord Jehovah**—A common formula claiming divine authority for a prophetic message. It is clear, however, that no theory concerning the *manner* in which the truth was made known can be based upon the use of the verb *say*. Like *see*, it has a narrower and a wider meaning, and in the prophetic books it is used in the wider sense. (see on *vision*). **Concerning Edom**—Directly or indirectly the entire book deals with Edom (see on Amos i, 11). In bitter resentment the prophet announces her doom, and while rejoicing in the downfall of Edom he glories in the future exaltation of the people of God.

Now follows the quotation from the earlier oracle, which Obadiah applies to his own period (see p. 291). **We have heard**—The parallel passage in Jer. xlix, 14, reads, "*I* have heard." Which is the original, it may be difficult to decide, and it matters little. In one case the author speaks as an individual, in the other he identifies himself with his countrymen. **Rumor**—R. V., "tidings"; literally, *that which is heard* (Isa. xxviii, 9; liii, 1). The tidings are those revealed by Jehovah to his people, in order to prepare them for impending emergencies (Amos iii,

is sent among the heathen, Arise ye, and let us rise up against her in battle. 2 Behold, I have made thee small among the heathen: thou art greatly despised.

3 The pride of thine heart hath

7). The rest of verse 1 gives the contents of the tidings. It has commonly been interpreted as meaning that Jehovah communicates a message to his people, and that at the same time he dispatches a herald to the surrounding nations with a similar message, to stir them up against Edom. Against this interpretation two objections may be raised: (1) It finds no support in the rest of the prophecy; (2) It takes unwarranted liberty with the text (see below). The difficulties vanish if a different meaning is given to 1b. Jehovah sends to his people a message which reveals to them that an ambassador has been sent by Edom to the surrounding nations to persuade them to join Edom in a sudden attack upon *Judah*.

This interpretation does complete justice to the language, and it may enable us to fix, approximately at least, the date of the earlier prophecy. The closing years of Jehoash were troublesome times for Judah; Hazael of Syria threatened Jerusalem, and in order to save the city Jehoash paid an enormous tribute (2 Kings xii, 17ff.). Dissatisfaction arose in the capital, and a revolt broke out which resulted in the king's death. These internal disturbances would be an opportune moment for a foreign invasion, and Edom, the long-time enemy, would quickly recognize it. It is worthy of note that immediately following the statement that Amaziah established himself upon the throne and punished the murderers of his father, 2 Kings xiv, 7, continues, "He slew of Edom in the Valley of Salt ten thousand, and took Sela by war." Might not the severity of the king be explained by the discovery of a plot such as is alluded to in Obad. 1? **And . . . is sent**—An object clause depending on "we have heard tidings"; a better rendering would be "*that* . . . is sent" (G.-K., 157a). **Ambassador**—Or, *herald*. He was sent to stir up the nations to war. **Heathen**—Better, R. V., "nations"; a designation of all nations outside of Israel. **Arise ye, and let us rise up**—These words are not to be understood as giving both the appeal of the herald, "Arise ye," and the reply of the nations, "and (or, *yea*) let us rise up." The entire sentence belongs to the herald; he urges the nations to rise, and then, associating the power he represents with them, he calls out, "Yea, let us rise" (compare Jer. xlix, 14, where the second verb is omitted). **Against her**—Ordinarily interpreted as referring to Edom; if so, the feminine form of the pronoun is peculiar, since "the writer always uses the masculine in referring to Edom." Some remove the peculiarity by changing the form of the pronoun; it seems better, however, to interpret the pronoun as referring to Judah (see above). True, Judah is not mentioned by name, while Edom is; but it must be remembered that this is a quotation removed from its context, in which the name may have been found.

In verse 2 Jehovah appears as the speaker. Having revealed to his people the conspiracy of Edom, he comforts them by assuring them that the scheme cannot succeed, since he has resolved to take the part of Judah against Edom. **Behold**—Calls attention to the denunciation contained in 2–9. **I have made thee small**—A *prophetic* perfect. Jehovah has already decided upon the humiliation of Edom, and this decision makes the result as certain as if it had already been accomplished. **Thou art greatly despised**—Also a *prophetic* perfect. When Edom's glory is brought low she will be despised by the other nations. **Among the heathen**—R. V., "nations"; which she sought to stir up against Judah (verse 7). **Greatly**—Jer. xlix, 15, reads "among men," which would give perfect parallelism with "among the nations." Here Jere-

deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts [c]of the rock, whose habitation *is* high; [d]that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground? 4 [e]Though thou exalt *thyself* as the eagle, and though thou [f]set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the LORD. 5 If [g]thieves came to thee, if robbers by night, (how art thou

[c] 2 Kings 14. 7.——[d] Isa. 14. 13, 14, 15; Rev. 18. 7.

[e] Job 20. 6; Jer. 49. 16; 51. 53; Amos 9. 2.——[f] Hab. 2. 9.——[g] Jer. 49. 9.

miah may have preserved the original; the Obadiah reading may be due to a later corruption.

Calvin, Pusey, and others favor a different interpretation of verse 2. They think that the tenses refer to the past. The divine providence assigned to Edom a humble position among the nations of the earth, but in their pride (verse 3) the Edomites exalted themselves contrary to Jehovah's purpose; therefore Jehovah must bring them down (verse 4). The first interpretation seems preferable.

3, 4. It was the pride and arrogance of Edom that caused her to scheme against the people of Jehovah. This arrogance was based very largely upon the almost impregnable position of the Edomite strongholds; but, says Jehovah, these natural defenses will not be able to withstand the divine attacks. **Pride**—Not the rock-castles, though these furnished the basis for the pride. For the sake of emphasis the subject is, contrary to common Hebrew usage, placed first. **Clefts of the rock**—The word translated "rock" —Heb. *sela'*—might be understood as a proper noun, *Sela*, which is the name of the ancient capital of Edom, changed at a later time to *Petra*, a word of similar import. If so, the reference would be to the rock-hewn dwellings of the capital. "Sela was situated on either side of a deep ravine, which runs winding like a stream through precipitous and overhanging cliffs for a distance of not less than a mile and a half. The cliffs are honeycombed with caverns, and in these caverns, reached by artificial means of access, the Edomites dwelt" (compare Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible*, article "Sela"). It is more probable, however, that the allusion is to the rocky features of the entire country. **Who shall bring me down to the ground?**—To the proud Edomites their position seemed impregnable; they might laugh at every attempt to displace them. "The great strength of a position such as Sela's was shown during the war of the independence of Greece, in the case of the monastery of Megaspelion, which was situated, like Sela, on the face of a precipice. Ibrahim Pasha was unable *to bring* its defenders *down* by assault from below or above, and though ungarrisoned it baffled his utmost efforts." The failure of the natural strongholds of Edom to protect the inhabitants would bring out more prominently the irresistible power of Jehovah (Jer. xlix, 16).

4. No human expedient can prevent the execution of the divine purpose. **Though thou exalt thyself**—R. V., "Though thou mount on high." The verb is transitive, and the object "thy nest" should be supplied: "Though thou place high thy nest as the eagle" (so Jer. xlix, 16). The eagle builds his nest in places almost inaccessible to men, but God can reach it; and though the nests of the Edomites should be among the stars Jehovah will find it easy to bring them down (Amos ix, 2; compare Job xx, 6, 7; Isa. xiv, 13).

In verses 5, 6 the prophet pictures the completeness of the destruction by a comparison of the calamity to come with familiar experiences. **Thieves . . . robbers . . . grape-gatherers**—R. V. brings out the thought more satisfactorily by reading the first question of verse 5, "would they not steal *only* till they had enough?" The second reads, "would they not leave some gleaning grapes?" Thieves and robbers, it is

cut off!) would they not have stolen till they had enough? if the grapegatherers came to thee, [h]would they not leave [1]*some* grapes? 6 How are *the things* of Esau searched out!

[h] Deut. 24. 21; Isa. 17. 6; 24. 13.—[1] Or, *gleanings?*

true, take and carry off whatever they can lay their hands on; but when they have satisfied their desire they go away leaving some things behind. In a similar manner grapegatherers do not pick every single berry or grape; with (Lev. ix, 10; Deut. xxiv, 21) or without intention they leave some gleanings. Not so Edom's conqueror; he will leave behind nothing but waste and desolation. **How art thou cut off!**—A parenthetical exclamation by the prophet, forced from him by the awful character of the judgment which, in his prophetic vision, he sees already accomplished. **How are the things of Esau searched out!**—Literally, *How are they searched out, Esau!* An expression of amazement at the completeness of the ruin. Every corner of Edom will be searched thoroughly and the plunder will be carried off. **Hidden things**—R. V., "hidden treasures." The treasures stored in the treasure houses hewn in the rock in inaccessible places. These hiding places will be discovered and the treasures will be taken away as booty. Edom will be completely despoiled (Jer. xlix, 9).

Verse 7 takes us back to verse 1. There we are told that Edom attempted to instigate a conspiracy against Judah; verse 7 states that her attempts will be futile; the allies in which she puts her trust will prove her ruin. The erroneous interpretation of verse 1 (see above) is responsible for many wild statements concerning the meaning of verse 7; if the interpretation suggested above is accepted the difficulties vanish. There certainly is no reason for separating verse 7 from the preceding verses; verses 1–9 form one continuous oracle. **All the men of thy confederacy**—

how are his hidden things sought up! 7 All the men of thy confederacy have brought thee *even* to the border: [2][i]the men that were at peace with thee have deceived thee, *and*

[2] Heb. *the men of thy peace.*—[i] Jer. 38. 22.

Those who joined or were expected to join the confederacy planned by Edom (verse 1); hence identical with "the nations" (verse 1). **Have brought thee even to the border**—R. V., "on thy way, even to the border"; margin, "have driven thee out." This marginal reading is accepted by several recent writers, and the driving out of the Edomites is interpreted of their expulsion from their borders by Arab tribes during the sixth or fifth century B. C. Others understand the words as signifying that the allies sent "their troops with them as far as the frontier and then ordered them to turn back." Neither view is correct. The meaning is rather that the ambassadors whom Edom had sent to negotiate the alliance, and who thus represented the nation, were sent back to the frontier with due respect and ceremonies, with fair speeches and pleasing promises. In reality not one of the nations cared to entangle herself in such an alliance. **The men that were at peace with thee**—The surrounding nations; identical with "men of thy confederacy" and "the nations" (verse 1). The Edomites expected to experience no difficulty in persuading their friendly neighbors to join the conspiracy. **Have deceived thee**—By making fair promises when they had no intention of keeping them. **Prevailed against thee**—Standing by itself this expression might mean that "these very nations with whom they have hitherto been on terms of amity and peace shall turn their forces against them and prevail." But this is not the meaning in this passage. Jer. xxxviii, 22, offers a good parallel. There R. V. margin reads, "The men of thy peace (the identical expression) have deceived thee, and have prevailed

prevailed against thee; [3]*they that eat* thy bread have laid a wound under thee: [k]*there is* none understanding [4]in him. 8 [l]Shall I not in that day,

[3] Heb. the men *of thy bread.*—[k] Isa. 19. 11, 12.

[4] Or, *of it.*—[l] Job 5. 12, 13; Isa. 29. 14; Jer. 49. 7.

over thee: now that thy feet are sunk in the mire, they are turned away back." The meaning of this passage is that the false advisers got the king into trouble and then left him to his fate. This is the thought of Obadiah. The nations made fair promises and thus encouraged the scheme of Edom; they overcame any scruples or hesitancy on the part of the latter; but when the real crisis arrives Edom will have to fight her battles alone. **They that eat thy bread have laid a wound under thee**—R. V., "lay a snare under thee"; literally, *thy bread they lay a snare under thee.* A very difficult and much-discussed expression. Following the rather free renderings of A. V. and R. V., it is commonly interpreted in the sense that those who are bound to the Edomites by sacred ties of hospitality will make a treacherous assault upon them. Keil translates, "They make thy bread a wound under thee," but his interpretation closely resembles the one just given (see below). Nowack considers the case hopeless, while other recent writers have suggested more or less radical emendations. Thus Marti reads, "they will settle in thy place"; Winckler, "thy flesh they will devour, thy sustenance they will take away." Cheyne substitutes proper names in accord with his peculiar *Yerachmeelite* theory. The difference of opinion among scholars is due to uncertainty with regard to two points. In the first place, it is not certain what part of the sentence is "thy bread"; in the next, the meaning of *māṣôr* cannot be fully determined. Does it mean *snare* or *wound?* Evidently "thy bread" is not the subject of the verb, for the former is in the singular while the latter is in the plural. Hence Keil takes it to be the first object of the verb. Then he continues: "And consequently the subject of the previous clause still continues in force: they who befriended thee make thy bread, that is, the bread which they ate from thee or with thee, into a wound under thee, that is, an occasion for destroying thee." Recognizing the need of a more lucid interpretation, he adds: "We have not to think of common meals of hospitality here, . . . but the words are to be taken figuratively, after the analogy of Psa. xli, 10, which floated before the prophet's mind, . . . as denoting conspiracies on the part of those who were allied to Edom, and drew their own sustenance from it, the rich trading nation, to destroy that very nation." Keil thus understands *māṣôr* to mean "wound," and for this he finds support in such passages as Hos. v, 13; Jer. xxx, 13; compare Isa. i, 6. Others supply from the preceding clause only "men," and combining this with "thy bread" read "men of thy bread"—that is, men who have eaten bread with thee and thus are bound to thee by the sacred ties of hospitality; or, men who draw their sustenance from thee (so A. V. and R. V.). Hitzig reaches the same result by supplying a participial form, "*they that eat* thy bread." Whatever rendering we may give to the Hebrew, the expression remains peculiar. A smoother reading is offered by LXX., which omits the first troublesome word entirely, carries the subject over from the preceding clause, and translates *māṣôr* "snare," giving to it a meaning not found elsewhere in the Old Testament. Following the LXX. we may read, "The men that were at peace with thee have deceived thee, and have prevailed against thee; they have placed a snare under thee."

Ordinary intelligence should have recognized the deception, but Edom was blind; hence the exclamation, **There is none understanding in him—**

saith the LORD, even destroy the wise *men* out of Edom, and understanding out of the mount of Esau? 9 And thy [m]mighty *men*, O [n]Teman, shall be dismayed, to the end that every one of the mount of Esau may be cut off by slaughter.

[m] Psa. 76. 5; Amos 2. 16.

[n] Jer. 49. 7.

That is, in Edom (masculine throughout, see on verse 1). This does not mean, "in consequence of the calamity which thus bursts upon the Edomites they lose their wonted discernment, and know neither what to do nor how to help themselves"; nor is it equivalent to "all this is caused by thy want of understanding"; it is simply an exclamation of amazement that the Edomites should fail to see the evident deception. The change in the same address from the second person to the third is not uncommon in Hebrew prophecy, and in the present case it is quite natural, since the exclamation is not addressed directly to Edom, nor to anyone else in particular.

In verse 8 the prophet explains the lack of wisdom. Jehovah will cause the wise men to cease. This thought is expressed by a rhetorical question, equivalent to *Surely I will destroy.* **In that day**—The day in which the events recorded in verse 7 will take place. **Destroy the wise men**—This threat is not to be understood as meaning that the wise men will suffer death, but that they will be destroyed *as wise men;* in other words, their wisdom and understanding will be withdrawn. As a result they will be unable to discover the schemes of "the nations," or give counsel to their own rulers. For the sake of emphasis the same thought is repeated. **Understanding**—Or, *discernment;* the power to see and estimate things correctly. **Mount of Esau**—Mount Seir. After the occupation of the territory southeast of the Dead Sea by the descendants of Esau the two names came to be used interchangeably. Some commentators seem to think that the parallel passage in Jer. xlix shows no acquaintance with this verse. It is quite probable, however, that Jer. xlix, 7, reflects the thought of this passage (compare Isa. xix, 3, 11; xxix, 14). Eliphaz, one of Job's "wise" friends, was an Edomite (Job ii, 11); and later traditions seem to imply that the Edomites boasted in the possession of special wisdom. In presenting a list of nations claiming extraordinary wisdom Baruch iii, 22, says, "The Agarenes that seek wisdom upon earth, the merchants of Meran and Teman, the authors of fables and the seekers out of understanding, none of these have known the way of wisdom, or remember her paths."

9. **Mighty men**—Warriors. When they realize at last that they have been entrapped, that wisdom and discernment have taken their flight, the warriors will lose heart, and the result will be the complete undoing of Edom. **O Teman**—The change to the direct address adds force and intensity to the threat. On *Teman* see comment on Amos i, 12. **By slaughter**—Ordinarily this is taken to refer to the slaughter to be inflicted upon Edom by her enemies; but according to the above interpretation there is nothing in this section (compare 17ff.) to indicate that the overthrow of Edom will be wrought by her enemies—Jehovah himself will strike the blow. Hence Ewald suggested the translation "without battle," which is grammatically possible but makes an extremely weak conclusion of the threat. It seems better to carry the word over to verse 10 (so LXX., Peshitto, Vulgate). The preposition is the same as that before "violence" in verse 10, so that "*for* slaughter" might be read instead of "*by* slaughter," the two together "for slaughter, for the violence done . . . ," or even "for the slaughter and violence done"; the two words indicating two causes of the judgment to come. Keil objects

10 For *thy* [o]violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and [p]thou shalt be cut off for ever. 11 In the day that thou

[o] Gen. 27. 41; Psa. 137. 7; Ezek. 25. 12; 35. 5; Amos 1. 11.—[p] Ezek. 35. 9; Mal. 1. 4.

to this change on the ground that, if adopted, the stronger and more specific term would precede the weaker and more general. In this Nowack agrees with Keil, and he gets out of the difficulty by rejecting "for slaughter" as a marginal gloss to "for violence," "originating with a reader to whom the latter expression did not appear pointed enough" (so also Marti). However, the objection of Keil is not well founded, and the omissions suggested by the other two commentators mentioned are arbitrary. It is not true that the stronger and more specific term precedes the weaker and more general; the two words refer to two distinct crimes, of which the second, according to Jewish conceptions, was the more serious. Verses 10–14 evidently refer to the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 (see p. 288). In this calamity the afflictions of Israel were twofold: on the one hand, they suffered personal losses; on the other, their sanctuary was desecrated and destroyed. The author of Psa. cxxxvii seems to be concerned with the religious afflictions; and the deep feeling manifesting itself in his imprecations was undoubtedly due to the fact that the religious losses were to him of far greater consequence than any temporal privations. Of the two expressions in this passage "slaughter" may well stand for the personal wrongs suffered, "violence" for the wrongs done to the religious life and institutions. Of these the second was felt more keenly than the former; therefore the order of the words is perfectly natural.

Causes of the judgment, 10–14.

In verse 10 the prophet who gave to the book its present form begins to speak. In the contents of 1–9 he saw a message suitable to his own age; and since it expressed his own thoughts in a vivid and forceful manner, he adopted it for his own use. But the causes responsible for the threat at the earlier period were probably not the same as those which led him to proclaim the same judgment. The latter grew out of his own present historical situation; hence he must set them forth in his own language. This he does in 10ff., beginning (verse 10) with the general statement that the judgment is made necessary by the hostility of Edom toward Judah, which statement is followed by a reiteration of the previous threat. In 11–14 he describes in greater detail the crimes of Edom.

10. **Violence**—As already stated (see on verse 9), "slaughter" (verse 9) should be connected with "violence"; the one referring to personal suffering, the other to the violence done to religious customs and institutions. **Thy brother Jacob**—Throughout the entire Old Testament the ancestor of the Israelites, Jacob, and the ancestor of the Edomites, Esau, are regarded as brothers. The reference to this intimate relationship makes the crime appear in even more glaring colors (see on Amos i, 11). The origin of the hostility between the two is traced to the time of their birth (Gen. xxv, 25, 26; compare xxvii, 41). From the ancestors the hostility apparently descended upon their posterity; at any rate, the history of the two nations is marked by repeated outbreaks of hostility (for example, Num. xx; Amos i, 11). The fact that the Israelites are urged repeatedly to observe a friendly and brotherly attitude toward Edom (Deut. ii, 4, 5; xxiii, 7) may indicate that the natural tendency of Israel was not in the direction of returning good for evil. **Shame**—Or, *disgrace.* **Cover**—A picture of abundance. The disgrace will seem the greater because of the former boastfulness. **Shalt be cut off**—The

stoodest on the other side, in the day that the strangers [5]carried away captive his forces, and foreigners entered into his gates, and [q]cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou *wast* as one of them. 12 But [6]thou should-

[5] Or, *carried away his substance.*—[q] Joel 3. 3; Nah. 3. 10.—[6] Or, *do not behold*, etc.

punishment is described here in its ultimate completeness; it is described more fully in 15ff.

In 11–14 the prophet proceeds to describe in greater detail the crimes of Edom. In the calamity that befell the people of Jehovah the Edomites proved themselves as hostile as the more active enemies. They manifested their hostility by maliciously rejoicing in the misfortune of Judah (12), by committing acts of robbery (13), and by cutting down fugitive Jews (14). **In the day that thou stoodest on the other side**—The next clause shows that this is the day of the calamity of Jerusalem. "Stoodest on the other side" might possibly refer to neutrality; they stood by idly when they should have rendered assistance to their brother. The context, however, favors a different interpretation; they stood on the side of the enemies, in a spirit of hostility, not neutrality (2 Sam. xviii, 13). **Even thou wast as one of them**—Though, at least in the beginning, not taking an active part in destroying and plundering the city and the people, the Edomites manifested the same hostile spirit, and therefore were as culpable as the "strangers" who did the actual work. **Strangers . . . foreigners**—The Chaldeans and their allies in the expedition against Judah in 588–586. **Carried away . . . his forces**—R. V., "his substance"; the forces or substance of Jacob. Since the verb is literally, *carry into exile*, and is used but rarely of the carrying away of booty, the reference may be to the carrying into exile of the military forces and of the inhabitants of the land, rather than to the carrying away of the spoil. **Entered into his gates**—The gates of Jacob, which cannot be limited to the gates of Jerusalem. The prophet means the gates of all the cities of Jacob; the enemies overran the whole land. The next sentence speaks of the calamity that befell Jerusalem. **Cast lots upon Jerusalem**—The city and its inhabitants and contents. The lots were cast for the purpose of dividing the spoil among the captors (see on Joel iii, 3; compare Amos vii, 17).

If A. V. could be followed in the translation of the tenses in 12–14 the interpretation of these verses would be an easy task; the verses would then be an expansion of the condemnation contained in verse 11. R. V., however, changes the translation, following more closely the Hebrew, so that 12–14 are made to contain a series of warnings addressed to the Edomites. These warnings have created much difficulty for interpreters (see, for example, p. 290); however, if the verses are assigned to the proper historical situation the case becomes less complicated. Verse 11 evidently speaks of events connected with the destruction of Jerusalem, probably events of the recent past. But the humiliation of Judah was not the work of a single day. Jer. xli makes it plain that for several months there were outbreaks of hostility against the small community left behind under Gedaliah. If the delivery of the oracle is placed in the period following the sack of the city by the Chaldeans, during the months or even years in which the Ammonites and other surrounding nations continued to harass the Jews, the interpretation becomes less difficult. In deep emotion the prophet beholds the continued hostility of Edom; the reference to past crimes (verse 11) rouses him still more; and moved by righteous indignation he warns the Edomites to abstain from further crimes, giving as one reason the fact that by persisting in wrongdoing they will only increase the severity of their judgment (15, 16).

est not have [r]looked on [s]the day of thy brother in the day that he became a stranger; neither shouldest thou have [t]rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; neither shouldest thou have [7]spoken proudly in the day of distress. 13 Thou shouldest not have entered into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity; yea, thou shouldest not have looked on their affliction in the day of their calamity, nor have laid *hands* on their [8]substance in the day of their

[r] Psa. 22. 17; 54. 7; 59. 10; Mic. 4. 11; 7. 10.—[s] Psa. 37. 13; 137. 7.—[t] Job 31. 29; Prov. 17. 5; 24. 17, 18; Mic. 7. 8.

[7] Heb. *magnified thy mouth.*—[8] Or, *forces.*

Marti, who dates the verses in the fifth century, explains the warnings by saying that the author transposed himself in thought in the midst of the calamity, though in reality it was a thing of the past; and he holds that the practical force of the warnings is similar to that implied in the rendering of the A. V. This interpretation, however, seems less natural than the one suggested above.

The comments on 12–14 are based upon the translation of R. V. The warnings in these verses proceed from the lower to the higher. The prophet warns Edom "not to rejoice in Judah's troubles (12), nor to make common cause with the conquerors (13), nor to outdo and complete the work of the enemy (14)." A climax may be noticed also within verse 12. **Look not**—The Hebrew construction implies the idea of looking with pleasure and satisfaction—take delight in. **Rejoice not**—An advance over the preceding; to give expression to the delight. **Speak proudly**—Literally, *make thy mouth great,* in contempt and derision. This marks the climax. It "may refer either to proud, boastful words, or to mocking grimaces and contortions of the mouth." **The day of thy brother**—The day when the calamities mentioned in verse 11 fell upon Jerusalem (compare Psa. cxxxvii, 7, "the day of Jerusalem"). The other three clauses describe the day more definitely. **The day of his disaster**—The Hebrew word translated *disaster* occurs only here; a similar word is used in Job xxxi, 3, in the same sense. Both come from the same root from which is derived the word *foreigner* (verse 11); hence the primary meaning of the word would seem to be "treatment such as is accorded to a stranger," which in many cases would be cruel and unjust, or "treatment which makes of a person a stranger." The expression used here may mean either "the day on which he received cruel treatment" or "the day on which he was made a stranger by being carried into exile." **The day of their destruction**—Or, *undoing.* A stronger term than the preceding. **Distress**—The deplorable condition subsequent to the fall of the city.

In verse 13 the prophet warns Edom not to make common cause with the conquerors who are plundering the city and state. Again the prophet presents the warning in the form of a climax, to enter in, to look upon, to seize. **The gate of my people**—*Gate*—city (Mic. i, 9); here evidently Jerusalem. **In the day of their calamity**—Repeated three times for the sake of emphasis, to indicate the greatness of the calamity, and at the same time to call attention to the greater crime of Edom, "since it is precisely at the time of a brother's calamity that such treachery and malicious joy is doubly culpable." **Yea, look not thou**—Literally, *look not thou, even thou.* The emphasis is on the pronoun. "A brother should be the last to gloat over the misfortunes of a brother" (see on Amos i, 11). **Neither lay ye hands on their substance**—Do not join the foreign robbers in plundering the city (compare verse 11, where the same noun is used).

In verse 14 the prophet reaches the climax. He warns them against seizing Jewish fugitives to murder them

calamity; 14 Neither shouldest thou have stood in the crossway, to cut those of his that did escape; neither shouldest thou have [9]delivered up those of his that did remain in the day of distress. 15 [u]For the day of the LORD *is* near upon all the heathen: [x]as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head. 16

[9] Or, *shut up*, Psa. 31. 8.——[u] Ezek. 30. 3; Joel 3. 14 ——[x] Ezek. 35. 15; Hab. 2. 8.

or deliver them up to their enemies. **Stand thou not in the crossway**—The place where one or more roads meet, or where one road divides into two or more. There the greatest number of fugitives could be seized. **To cut off**—Not merely to cut off their escape, but to murder them after they had escaped from the general slaughter. **Deliver not up**—To the enemy from whom they had escaped. The allusion may be to fugitives who took refuge in Edom.

The terrors of the day of Jehovah, 15, 16.

In verse 10 the prophet announces judgment upon the Edomites for their ill treatment of Judah; in verse 11 he describes in greater detail their wrongdoings; in 12–14 he warns them to abstain from further violence. These warnings he backs up in 15, 16 by calling attention to the *day of Jehovah,* when Edom and all other enemies of Jehovah will receive their just dues. **For**—Connects with verse 14 more directly than with verse 9. **The day of Jehovah is near upon all the heathen**—R. V., "all the nations." Edom is joined here with the other enemies of Jehovah; but 15b sets her apart again from the rest. Though the transition from 15a to 15b is abrupt there is insufficient reason for rejecting the latter as out of harmony with the former. The seeming difficulty may be removed by regarding 15b as an attempt on the part of the prophet to emphasize the special guilt of the Edomites, which might possibly be overlooked, were they not singled out for condemnation. In a sense, therefore, 15b is a parenthetical clause. **Day of Jehovah**—See on Joel i, 15. **As thou hast done**—The latter part of verse 15 lays down the basis of recompense, the *lex talionis* (compare Ezek. xxxv, 15; Psa. cxxxvii, 8; see on Joel iii, 7). This idea is continued, in somewhat different form, in verse 16. "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you."

The interpretation of verse 16 depends upon the determination as to who are the persons addressed with *you.* 1. Are they Edomites? "As ye Edomites have drunk in triumphant revelry and carousal on my holy mountain, rejoicing with unhallowed joy over its destruction, so shall (ye and) all the nations drink continually the wine of God's wrath and indignation." 2. Are they the Jews? "As ye have drunk (who are) upon my holy mountain; as even you who are my chosen people, and inhabit the mountain consecrated by my presence, have not escaped the cup of my wrath, so all the nations shall drink of that same cup, not with a passing salutary draught as you have done, but with a continuous swallowing down, till they have wrung out the dregs thereof and been brought to nothing by their consuming power." Against the first and in support of the second interpretation it is urged: (1) The former would necessitate a change of meaning in *drink;* in the first sentence it would have to be understood literally, in the second figuratively. (2) In other parts of the book Edom is addressed in the singular, here in the plural. (3) The Edomites are a part of "all the nations" (15a); it would be peculiar to have them separated in verse 16 (15b is of a different nature). (4) "The contrast between the Edomites reveling upon Mount Zion and the nations drinking the cup of Jehovah's wrath gives no sense." (5) It is also urged that the second interpretation alone

[y]For as ye have drunk upon my holy mountain, *so* shall all the heathen drink continually, yea, they shall drink, and they shall [10]swallow down, and they shall be as though they had not been.

17 [z]But upon mount Zion, [a]shall be [11]deliverance, and [12]there shall

[y] Jer. 25. 28, 29; 49. 12; Joel 3. 17; 1 Pet. 4. 17.—[10] Or, *sup up.*—[z] Joel 2. 32.

[a] Amos 9. 8.—[11] Or, *they that escape.*—[12] Or, *it shall be holy*, Joel 3. 17.

does justice to *continually* "by virtue of the contrast which it suggests between the Jews for whom the bitter draught was only temporary, for amendment and not for destruction, and the heathen who were to drink on until they perished." (6) The parallel passage (see, however, p. 291) in Jer. xlix, 12 (compare xxv, 15–29; Lam. iv, 21, 22) is also quoted in support. But the second interpretation is by no means free from difficulties: (1) The rendering, "As ye have drunk who are upon my holy mountain," is grammatically impossible; "upon my holy mountain" belongs to "as ye have drunk." This objection, however, is valid only against the abovementioned translation of the passage; a proper translation might remove the difficulty. (2) Throughout the whole prophecy Edom seems to be addressed, never the people of Judah directly. (3) The parallelism with "even as thou hast done," referring to Edom (verse 15), favors the first view. (4) The meaning which Jeremiah gives to the passage cannot determine the meaning of Obadiah. If the two passages are dependent the one on the other, which is by no means certain (p. 291), the borrower evidently took considerable liberty with the passage borrowed, and he may have gone so far as to alter the original meaning. On the whole, the first interpretation seems to be the more natural. It is in more perfect accord with the context, and it gives to the expression "drunk upon my holy mountain" its natural meaning. The use of *drink* in a twofold sense is not a serious objection; on the contrary, such change would be striking, and thus would add force to the prophetic message. The word *continually* would not lose its significance. Abrupt transitions from singular to plural, or plural to singular, are not uncommon in prophetic literature; and in this case the change may easily be accounted for by assuming that the prophet desired to include, in thought at least, all the nations. This assumption is supported by the fact that in 15, 16 the Edomites and the other nations are thought of as intimately associated, both in oppressing Judah and in enduring the judgment. For these reasons we may consider the words addressed to the Edomites, and by implication to all the nations. **As ye have drunk**—There is nothing improbable in the thought that the Edomites joined the destroyers in carousals and revelry to celebrate the downfall of the Jewish nation and the capture of the city, and that they did this on the temple mountain. **My holy mountain**—See on Joel ii, 1. **So shall all the heathen** ["nations"] **drink**—All who have manifested hostility toward the chosen people of God must drink the cup of the divine wrath. **Continually**—"So that the turn to drink never passes from the nations to Judah" (Isa. li, 22, 23). **Swallow down**—R. V. margin, "talk foolishly." Of these the former is to be preferred. They will be compelled to empty the cup to the bottom. A figurative description of the severity and completeness of the judgment. The result will be utter destruction for the nations that have been the enemies of Jehovah and of his people.

The exaltation of the Jews, 17–21.

The judgment upon the nations is accompanied and followed by the restoration and glorification of Zion (compare Joel ii, 32ff.). The prophet's hope of the future embraces four elements: (1) the restoration of the remnant (17); (2) the annihilation of

be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions. 18 And the house of Jacob [b]shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau for stubble, and they shall kindle in them, and devour them; and there shall not be *any* remaining of the house of Esau; for the LORD hath spoken *it*. 19 And *they of* the south [c]shall possess

[b] Isa. 10. 17; Zech. 12. 6.

[c] Amos 9. 12.

Edom (18); (3) the expansion of the territory of the Jews (19, 20); (4) the supremacy of Jehovah (21).

17a is rendered more accurately in R. V., "But in mount Zion there shall be those that escape, and it shall be holy." For the interpretation of the first clause see on Joel ii, 32. The nations are to be destroyed (16); even some Jews seem to be doomed, but not all; a remnant consisting of the loyal sons of Jehovah shall be saved (see on Amos ix, 9). **It**—Mount Zion. **Shall be holy**—Literally, *holiness;* the noun is used instead of the adjective for the sake of emphasis (G.-K., 141c). The nations that defiled the temple mount (verse 16) having been destroyed, it will be consecrated to Jehovah, who sanctifies it by his presence; no unclean stranger will be allowed to pass through it and defile it again (Joel iii, 17). **The house of Jacob**—Identical with "those that escape." Since the prophetic expectation includes a reunion of Judah and Israel at the time of the restoration (Hos. i, 11; Ezek. xxxvii, 15ff.; Zech. x, 6, etc.), "house of Jacob" must include all Hebrews, whether of Israel or of Judah, who pass through the crisis unhurt (compare verse 18). **Shall possess their possessions**—Not the possessions of Edom and of the nations, which is promised in verses 18, 19, but their own former possessions (verse 20) which, through their sin, they had lost in 721 and 586. The restoration of the exiles to the promised land is considered by all prophets the first step toward the realization of the felicity of the new kingdom of God. Vocalizing the last word somewhat differently, LXX. renders "and the house of Jacob will possess those who possessed them," that is, those who formerly robbed the Jews of their possessions. Several modern commentators accept this as original, but, since this thought is the burden of verses 18, 19, the above interpretation of verse 17 is to be preferred.

18. The restored exiles will execute vengeance upon Edom. Several times the prophet has made it plain that Jehovah will destroy Edom; but, if the above suggested interpretation of verse 1 is correct, he has failed to state thus far how it is to be accomplished. This lack he supplies in verse 18, where he names the executors of the divine purpose. **House of Jacob . . . house of Joseph**—Though common usage may be urged against it, the context seems to require that the former should be interpreted as referring to the southern kingdom, the latter to the kingdom of the ten tribes. The two will become reunited at the time of the restoration (Hos. i, 11; Ezek. xxxvii, 15ff.; Isa. xi, 13, 14), and will be used by Jehovah as instruments of judgment (Zech. ix, 13). **Fire, . . . flame**—The figure is based upon devastation wrought by prairie and forest fires, which are not uncommon in Palestine during the dry season (see on Joel i, 19; compare Isa. v, 24; x, 17). **Stubble**—Which is readily devoured by the flames. The destruction will be so complete that no one will survive. **Jehovah hath spoken it**—Therefore nothing can prevent the carrying out of the threat (Joel iii, 8).

The remaining verses of Obadiah present grave difficulties, and the details of interpretation are more or less uncertain. However, the general thought seems to be that Israel, having destroyed Edom, will enter upon an era of prosperity and territorial expansion. This expansion is made

the mount of Esau; [d]and *they of* the plain the Philistines: and they shall possess the fields of Ephraim, and the fields of Samaria: and Benjamin *shall possess* Gilead. 20 And the captivity of this host of the children

[d] Zeph. 2. 7.

necessary by the large number of restored exiles. The old territory of Judah cannot hold them; they overflow in every direction. Lack of space forbids the consideration of the different translations, emendations, and interpretations proposed; all that can be done here is to point the way to the most probable interpretation.

An examination of verse 19 and a comparison of it with LXX. and with Josh. xv, 20ff., where the divisions of the territory occupied by Judah are named, leads to the following observations: 1. The verbs in verse 19 are in the plural, while the nouns that are ordinarily considered the subjects are in the singular. This creates apparently a difficulty; but construction according to the sense rather than according to strict grammatical rules is not uncommon in the Old Testament (G.-K., 145b), especially when a noun expresses a collective idea. Hence the English translators are undoubtedly correct in making *neghebh* the subject and rendering it "they of the south," the inhabitants of the Negeb. 2. The first verb is followed immediately by its subject; after the second verb the subject of the first must be supplied, which results in an unusually heavy and somewhat awkward sentence. 3. LXX. reads after the second verb τὸ ὄρος, "the mount," which may be taken as subject in the Greek, and it omits the first, "the field of." 4. In Josh. xv, 20ff., the territory of Judah is divided into three sections (or four, but the fourth is very small); the first is called "South" or "Negeb" (verse 21), the second "Lowland" (33), the third "Hill Country" (48), Heb. *har*, which corresponds to the Greek ὄρος. Bearing in mind these considerations it seems legitimate to emend the text of verse 19 so that it will read: "And the *Negeb* (the inhabitants of the Negeb) shall possess Mount Esau, and the *Lowland* (shall possess) the Philistines; the *Hill Country* shall possess (the field of) Ephraim and the field of Samaria, and Benjamin (shall possess) Gilead." **Negeb**—Commonly translated "south." A geographical term, denoting the southern section of the Central Range of Palestine. It is generally spoken of as extending from south of Beer-sheba to the wilderness of Tih; the Old Testament, however, places its northern border near Hebron. The new inhabitants of this district will expand eastward and occupy the territory of Edom (see on verse 18). **Lowland**—Heb. *shephēlāh*. Also a geographical term, denoting the low foothills between the Central Range and the Philistine Plain; the inhabitants of this region will spread to the west and southwest and occupy Philistia. **Hill country**—That portion of the territory of Judah which covered the Central Range, between the Shephelah and the Jordan valley or the Dead Sea. Its inhabitants will reach northward and claim the territory south of the Plain of Esdraelon, which before 721 had belonged to the northern kingdom, and part of which seems to have fallen to Judah after the deportation of the northern tribes (2 Kings xxiii, 15). Nearly the entire territory here promised to Judah is allotted in Josh. xv to that tribe. During its national existence Judah never possessed all this territory; here the prophet promises that subsequent to the day of Jehovah it will surely enter upon its possessions; yea, in the south at least, it will go even beyond its ideal borders (compare Gen. xxviii, 14). **Benjamin shall possess Gilead**—The popular impression is that Benjamin joined Judah after the division subsequent to the death of Solomon, though 1 Kings xii, 20, says, "There was none that followed the house of

of Israel *shall possess* that of the Canaanites, *even* [e]unto Zarephath; and the captivity of Jerusalem, [13]which *is* in Sepharad, [f]shall possess

[e] 1 Kings 17. 9, 10.—[13] Or, shall possess *that which* is *in Sepharad*.—[f] Jer. 32. 44.

David, but the tribe of Judah only." In reality the border line ran through the territory of Benjamin, the greater part belonging to the northern kingdom. Obadiah's promise is for those Benjamites who allied themselves with Judah. They will share the prosperity of Judah; and while the latter will possess the territory west of the Jordan as far north as the Plain of Esdraelon, the former will receive the entire territory east of the Jordan.

Verse 20 is another exceedingly difficult verse; it perplexed the English translators, as may be seen from the marginal notes in R. V. Nowack considers the text "hopelessly corrupt," and his opinion is shared by other commentators. The most probable rendering of the present Hebrew text is offered in R. V. margin, "And the captives of this host of the children of Israel, that are among the Canaanites, even unto Zarephath, and the captives of Jerusalem, that are in Sepharad, shall possess the cities of the South (or Negeb)." In verse 19 the prophet seems to have in mind the great body of exiles in the far east; but we know that many Jews took refuge among the neighboring nations (Jer. xl, 11, 12). Of two colonies made up of these fugitives the prophet seems to speak in verse 20. **Israel, . . . Jerusalem**—Most commentators think that the prophet distinguishes here between the descendants of the exiles coming from the northern kingdom, Israel, and those coming from the south, Judah, called here by the name of its capital, Jerusalem. It is better, however, to understand "Israel" as synonymous with "Jacob" (verse 18), denoting the people of Judah; and in distinction from "Jerusalem" the rural population, which scattered before the Chaldean armies. The one company addressed by the prophet is made up of these people, and the other is composed of former inhabitants of the capital. **This host**—The force of *this* is not quite clear, unless we assume that Obadiah is speaking of and to a company of which he himself is a member. To know that the prophet himself was an exile would add interest to his utterances. It has been explained also by assuming that he was addressing a definite company which he desired to comfort on its way into exile. **The land of the Canaanites**—Palestine; the prophet seems to think, however, especially of the northern portion, including a part of Phœnicia. There is nothing impossible or improbable in the thought that some of the Jews fled to these regions when they saw the Chaldeans approaching. **Zarephath**—In Luke iv, 26, R. V. margin, "Sarepta" (compare 1 Kings xvii, 9–24). At one time a city of considerable size; now an Arabic village called *Sarafend*, about midway between Tyre and Sidon. **Sepharad**—The Targum of Onkelos and many Jewish authorities take Sepharad to mean Spain; hence the name of Spanish Jews, *Sephardim*, as distinguished from German Jews, who are called *Ashkenazim*. Keil thinks of Sparta. Most modern commentators identify it with a region in Asia Minor, mentioned several times in Persian inscriptions; Winckler understands the name to be a designation of the whole of Asia Minor. The latter, however, was not subject to the Chaldeans; it was first conquered by Cyrus, and was organized into a satrapy by Darius Hystaspis. If the last-mentioned interpretation is correct the name points to a date subsequent to the fall of Jerusalem; and it is the presence of this name that has led many commentators to give a very late date to the prophecy in its present form. Others identify it with a *Shaparda* in Media, mentioned in the annals of Sargon. Until new information is brought to light the

sess the cities of the south. 21 And [g]saviors shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the [h]kingdom shall be the LORD'S.

[g] 1 Tim. 4. 16; James 5. 20.

[h] Psa. 22. 28; Dan. 2. 44; 7. 14, 27; Zech. 14. 9; Luke 1. 33; Rev. 11. 15; 19. 6.

place mentioned in Obadiah cannot be identified with absolute certainty; nor is it wise to base upon the presence of the name any conclusions as to the date of the prophecy. This uncertainty, however, does not affect the general sense of the utterance, which is that not only the exiles in Babylon but also those scattered throughout other portions of the world shall be brought back to their old homes in the south, from which the invasion of the Chaldeans had driven them. If this is the right interpretation of verse 20 its logical position would be before verse 18.

An entirely different meaning is given to the verse by the translators of A. V., which agrees, in part at least, with R. V. They give to it the meaning that the first company of exiles named will come into possession of northern Palestine, including a part of Phœnicia, while the second will occupy the southern portion, the two together the entire promised land. Certainty cannot be had; the probability is that the text has suffered.

21. With the enemies destroyed and the exiles restored, a life of permanent peace and prosperity will begin under the rule of earthly representatives of the Divine King. **Saviours**—The same name is given to the champions raised up by Jehovah during the period preceding the establishment of the monarchy (Judg. ii, 16; iii, 9, 15, etc.). Nothing is said of the character and nature of these Messianic saviours; their types are the "saviours" of the Book of Judges, and in its general aspects their work may have been expected to resemble that of the latter. **Judge**—Rule (see on Amos ii, 3). The saviours will rule on Mount Zion, the center of the kingdom of God during the Messianic age (verse 17; Isa. ii, 2–4), but their sway will extend beyond the borders of Judah. The territory of Edom, which will be in the possession of the restored exiles (verse 19), will be a part of the dominion of these "saviours"; but it should be noted that they will not rule over the Edomites, for they are annihilated (verse 18).

To this climax the prophet has been moving steadily from the beginning; the arrogance and unrighteous schemes of the Edomites (verse 1) will result in their own annihilation, and in the annexation of their territory by the despised Jews. The "saviours" in this verse correspond to the "Messianic king" of other prophetic utterances. **The kingdom shall be Jehovah's**—Over these "saviours" Jehovah will be the supreme ruler; the expression of his purpose will be supreme law, obedience and loyalty to him will be the chief ambition. With reference to the Messianic significance of verse 21 and the fulfillment of the Messianic expectations see the remarks on Mic. iv, 5, and at the close of chapter v.

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF JONAH.

The Prophet.

The events recorded in the Book of Jonah center around Jonah, the son of Amittai (i, 1). A prophet bearing the same name is mentioned in 2 Kings xiv, 25, and since the two names are found nowhere else in the Old Testament it is exceedingly probable that the Jonah of 2 Kings xiv, 25, and the hero of this little book are identical. According to the passage in Kings Jonah prophesied in the northern kingdom previous to the conquests achieved by Jeroboam II, which would make him a predecessor of Amos and Hosea. In addition we learn that he came from Gath-hepher, which was a village on the border of Zebulun and Naphtali, near Japhia and Rimmon (Josh. xix, 12, 13), a place commonly identified with the modern village of *el-Meshhed.* Here may be seen one of the numerous tombs of Jonah, and the natives, both Christians and Mohammedans, regard this as the home of the prophet. Their belief finds support in ancient Jewish and Christian traditions. Jerome, for example, states that the home and tomb of Jonah were shown two miles from Sepphoris on the road to Tiberias. Sepphoris is identified with the modern *Seffûrieh,* a village about two and one half miles from *el-Meshhed.*

Of the personal life of Jonah nothing is known except what is recorded in the book bearing his name and in 2 Kings xiv, 25. (On the historical value of the book see pp. 314ff.; 338ff.) Some modern commentators, following the suggestion of Hitzig, have thought that Jonah is the author of Isa. xv, 1—xvi, 12, of which Isaiah says that it was spoken *in time past,* or at least of the prophecy underlying the two chapters, but this is mere assumption and is not probable. That numerous

traditions and legends concerning Jonah should grow up among the post-biblical Jews is not surprising, in view of the peculiar character of the Book of Jonah, but these legends are of little or no importance in our study.

The Book of Jonah.

1. *Contents.*—The Book of Jonah narrates certain incidents connected with the prophet's commission to preach in Nineveh. It opens with an account of the commission of Jonah (i, 1, 2). Jonah, unwilling to obey, decided to flee "from the presence of Jehovah"; he went to Joppa and embarked for Tarshish, in Spain (3). Soon a great tempest arose, which threatened to destroy the ship (4). The terrified sailors attempted to save the vessel, but the danger only increased (5a). Meanwhile Jonah was asleep; he was finally aroused by the captain, who implored him to pray to his God for help. This he did, but no relief came (5b, 6). Then the sailors, convinced that the storm was due to the anger of a deity against some one on board, decided to discover the guilty one by casting the lot. It fell upon Jonah, who then made a confession and urged them to cast him overboard (7-12). At first they hesitated, but finally they cast him out, and immediately the sea "ceased from its raging" (13-15). As a result the men recognized that the God of Jonah was *the* God, and to him they offered sacrifice (16).

Jonah did not perish, for a "big fish" swallowed him, in whose belly he remained for three days (i, 17); at the end of that period he was cast forth "upon the dry land" (ii, 10). While in the fish's belly he offered a prayer consisting of thanksgiving for deliverance wrought and a promise forever to remain loyal to his God because "salvation is of Jehovah" (ii, 1-9).

After this wonderful deliverance the command to go to Nineveh was repeated, and this time the prophet obeyed. Having found a suitable place in the city, he delivered the message, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown"

(iii, 1-4). The effect of the preaching was immediate; king and people turned to Jehovah in sorrow and repentance, whereupon Jehovah determined to withhold the threatened judgment (5-10).

This displeased Jonah, and he complained bitterly because Jehovah showed mercy to the Ninevites; and finally he prayed that Jehovah should take his life (iv, 1-3). Jehovah rebuked him gently and afterward taught him by the miraculous growth and destruction of a "gourd" the absurdity of his complaint and the justice of the divine mercy (4-11).

2. *Outline.*—

I. JONAH'S COMMISSION, HIS DISOBEDIENCE, AND HIS PUNISHMENT ..... Chap. i, 1-16
1. Jonah's commission and disobedience ..... i, 1-3
2. The discovery of Jonah's guilt ..... i, 4-10
3. Jonah's punishment ..... i, 11-16
II. JONAH'S WONDERFUL DELIVERANCE ..... i, 17—ii, 10
1. Jonah, preserved in a fish's belly, reaches dry land ..... i, 17; ii, 10
2. Jonah's prayer ..... ii, 1-9
III. JONAH'S PREACHING AND NINEVEH'S REPENTANCE ..... iii, 1-10
1. Jonah's second commission and preaching ..... iii, 1-4
2. The repentance of the Ninevites ..... iii, 5-9
3. The withholding of the judgment ..... iii, 10
IV. JONAH'S COMPLAINT AND REBUKE ..... iv, 1-11
1. Jonah's displeasure and prayer for immediate death ..... iv, 1-3
2. Jehovah's remonstrance ..... iv, 4
3. Rebuke of Jonah's narrowness and justification of the divine mercy ..... iv, 5-11

Interpretation of the Book.

The Book of Jonah is unlike any other prophetic book in the Old Testament canon. All the others record chiefly prophetic *utterances,* though sometimes embodying brief narratives of events; this book records a prophet's *work and experiences,* giving little space to his utterances. The Book of Daniel does not come into consideration here, since it is an apocalyptic and not a prophetic book in the narrower sense of

that term. In some respects the Book of Jonah is unlike any other book in the entire Old Testament. It is unquestionably, as a Jewish tradition says, a book by itself. This being so, it cannot be thought strange that the most widely diverging views have been held concerning it.

For convenience' sake the various interpretations of the book may be divided into two classes: 1. The interpretation that views it as a *true history* of actual events. 2. The interpretations—there are several—that consider the purpose of the book to be primarily *didactic,* without intending to record actual history. Though interpreters belonging to the second class are constantly increasing in numbers, there have been even within recent years those who have insisted very strongly on the historical character of the book. Among scholars of a generation ago Pusey and Keil defended the historical interpretation so ably that more recent writers have added little or nothing to their arguments. Of the two Keil presents the arguments in a more systematic manner, and his outline may be followed here to indicate the grounds upon which the historical interpretation rests.

Before passing to these arguments it may be noted that the use of parables by Jesus forbids the *a priori* denial of the presence in the Old Testament of a didactic book which is not history. It is well also to bear in mind in this connection that the Old Testament itself is rich in symbolism, especially when speaking of the exile. Attention is called again to this fact in discussing the teaching of the book (p. 330); however, it may not be amiss to mention here one or two of such passages. The vision of the dry bones in Ezekiel xxxvii, one of the most sublime chapters in the Old Testament, is a symbolical representation of the restoration from exile (compare verse 12). An even closer, indeed a remarkably close, parallel to the picture of Jonah in the fish's belly and of his deliverance is presented by the prophet Jeremiah: "Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon hath *devoured* me, he hath crushed me, he hath made me an empty vessel, *he hath, like a monster, swal-*

lowed me up, he hath filled his maw with my delicacies; he hath cast me out" (li, 34). And again in verse 44: "And I will execute judgment upon Bel in Babylon, and I will bring forth out of his mouth that which he hath swallowed." If the Book of Jonah were regarded as a symbolical representation of the exile and the restoration, how natural it would sound as an expansion of this vivid picture of Jeremiah (see further p. 330).

Keil says concerning the book: "Its contents are neither pure fiction, allegory, nor myth; nor yet a prophetic legend, wrought up poetically with a moral and didactic aim, embellished into a miraculous story, and mingled with mythical elements; but with all its miracles it is to be taken as a true history of deep prophetico-symbolic and typical significance." In support of this position he advances the following reasons: 1. Traditions handed down both among Jews and among Christians agree in interpreting the book historically. 2. The many historical and geographical statements in the book are of a genuine historical character. For example, the mission of Jonah is in perfect keeping with the historical relations of his time; the description of the greatness of Nineveh (iii, 3) is in harmony with the statements of the classical writers; its deep moral corruption is testified to by Nah. iii, 1, Zeph. ii, 13ff.; and the mourning of man and beast (iii, 5-8) is confirmed as an Asiatic custom by Herodotus (ix, 24). 3. The fundamental thought of the book, that Jehovah would show mercy even to the heathen if they repented (iii, 10; iv, 10), excludes everything fictitious; the psychologically truthful delineation of the personality of the prophet, of the mariners, and of the Ninevites favors an historical interpretation. 4. The position of the book among the prophetical writings points in the same direction. "Had the collector of the canon not believed in the historical truth of this fact, had he beheld only religious truths in the garb of an allegory or fable in this book, why did he not place it among the Hagiographa?" 5. The historical character of the book is raised above all

doubts by the utterances of the Lord in Matt. xii, 39ff.; xvi, 4; Luke xi, 29-32, which at the same time throw light upon the prophetico-typical character of the prophetic mission. 6. The origin, contents, and tendency of the book become incomprehensible as soon as we reject the historical character of the narrative. 7. The objections raised by the opponents of the historical view rest partly upon an unjustifiable denial of the miraculous, partly on misunderstandings, unfounded assumptions, and untenable assertions.

To a superficial observer these arguments may appear overwhelming; but if they were so it would seem very strange that so many modern interpreters have remained unconvinced, that very few, if any, experts in Old Testament study to-day hold the historical view. It may be well, therefore, to consider these arguments briefly: 1. That the post-Old Testament Jewish writings, such as Tobit, 3 Maccabees, Josephus, Philo, and the Talmud considered the narrative of the book of Jonah as literal history may be readily admitted; and it is equally true that the historical view was commonly accepted by the early church fathers; but this fact is far from proving the historical character of the book, for Jewish traditions have been found very frequently to be unreliable, and it is universally admitted that in no case can their testimony be accepted as final. Early Christian traditions concerning Old Testament subjects have little or no independent value, since most of them were taken over bodily from the Jews without any inquiry into their accuracy or reliability. At the most, these traditions may serve as starting points in investigations, but they cannot be adhered to in the presence of legitimate contradictory evidence. 2. The phenomena mentioned under the second head are more weighty; but are they conclusive? That a Hebrew prophet might have visited Nineveh about 770 B. C. is undoubtedly true, but the possibility of such a visit by no means proves that it was actually made, or that all the events recorded in the Book of Jonah are historical. It is not quite accurate to say that the size of Nineveh as given in iii, 3, is in accordance

with the statements of classical authors; nor does it seem to be in accord with modern research (see on iii, 3). Koenig, a very cautious scholar, says that "the diameter of even the fourfold city (Gen. x, 11) was not equal to a three days' journey"; and he quotes Friedrich Delitzsch as saying, "The length of the road from Kouyunjik to Nimroud is only some twenty English miles." Similarly, the fact that the moral condition of Nineveh is described accurately, or that the writer is acquainted with ancient Asiatic customs is far from demonstrating that the whole book is intended to be historical narrative. Modern novels frequently embody accurate descriptions of moral conditions prevailing at a certain period, yet no one would claim that, for this reason, they must be accepted as historical throughout (compare *Quo Vadis*). 3. Why the fundamental idea of the book should exclude everything fictitious even in the external form cannot easily be seen. The use of parables by Jesus as a means of instruction indicates that the sublimest religious truths may be taught in the literary form of fiction. It is generally recognized that Shakespeare gives in his works "psychologically truthful" delineations of human nature; does it necessarily follow that his plays are historical in every detail? 4. With reference to the fourth point, C. H. H. Wright, who is exceedingly conservative and cautious, says, "If the book had been regarded as an historical narrative when the Hebrew canon was arranged, it would scarcely have been inserted among the prophetical books, or have been placed among them in the order in which it now stands." 5. The references of Jesus appear to some to decide the question finally in favor of the *historical* interpretation; on the other hand, there are devout Christian scholars who believe that the references of Jesus are in perfect accord with the *didactic* interpretation of the book. Many of the latter would be perfectly willing to accept the testimony of Jesus as final even in this purely literary question, if it could be shown that he gave or intended to give any decision affecting the point under consideration; but since they can find no

indication, direct or indirect, of any such desire or purpose on the part of Jesus they consider the question one that must be determined by scientific investigation. Of the verses mentioned, Matt. xii, 40, is thought by many not to be an original part of Jesus's utterance; but even granting that it is original, do the words of Jesus prove conclusively that the Book of Jonah is an historical book? The question is not whether the words *may* not be interpreted as implying an historical view—this may be readily admitted; this admission, however, leaves the question open, to be decided finally on other grounds. The question is rather, whether or not the words of Jesus do "raise above all doubt the historical character of the book." There are those who insist that they do, and who consider any other view a sure indication of infidelity and hostility to the Christian faith. "Our Lord says, 'Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly,' and no one who really believes him dare think that he was not" (Pusey). On the other hand, there are those equally devout and pious who in all sincerity believe that the question is not settled and was never intended to be settled by the utterances of Jesus. Says C. H. H. Wright: "The New Testament references decide nothing except that the book is in some way or other a book of prophecy. Consequently the question whether the book is also historical must be decided from internal evidence alone." Even Von Orelli admits, "It is not, indeed, proved with conclusive necessity that, if the resurrection of Jesus was a physical fact, Jonah's abode in the belly of the fish must also be just as historical." The present writer indorses most heartily the admirable statement of Dean Farrar: "If it could be shown that Jesus intended by these words to stamp the story as literally true, every Christian would at once, and as a matter of course, accept it. But this is an assumption, and it is a bad form of uncharitableness to adopt the tone of those commentators who charge their opponents with setting aside the authority of Christ. Seeing that our Lord so largely adopted the method of moral allegory in his own parabolic teaching—seeing that

it was part of his habit to embody truth in tales which were not literal facts, but were only told to fix deep spiritual lessons in the minds of the hearers—nothing is more possible than that he should have pointed to the deep symbolism of an Old Testament parable without at all intending to imply that the facts actually happened." The scribes and Pharisees had come to Jesus asking for a sign; he refused to give it, and declared that they already had a sign before them, his own preaching, and that one supreme sign should be given, "the Son of man shall be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." The prediction of the resurrection is the essential point; the reference to Jonah is only by way of illustration. For purposes of illustration it is of no consequence whether he draws upon the realms of poetry or of fact. Surely the point to be emphasized loses none of its reality or power if it is illustrated from allegory, parable, or poetry instead of from history. "Suppose we tell slothful people that theirs will be the fate of the man who buried his talent, is this to commit us to the belief that the personages of Christ's parables actually existed? Or take the homiletic use of Shakespeare's dramas—'as Macbeth did,' or 'as Hamlet said.' Does it commit us to the historical reality of Macbeth or Hamlet? Any preacher among us would resent being bound by such an inference. And if we resent this for ourselves, how chary we should be about seeking to bind our Lord by it." These words of G. A. Smith call attention to the injustice of insisting that Jesus, by referring to the Book of Jonah, put upon it the stamp of historicity; though it might have been better to state the argument in a slightly different form. The historicity of the person Jonah is not under investigation; therefore the parallels of G. A. Smith are not quite to the point. The question should have been worded, whether such references would prove that the parables of Jesus are narratives of actual historic facts, or that the plays of Shakespeare are historically true in every detail. We may conclude, then, that, unless it can be shown that Jesus meant to confirm the historical character

of the Book of Jonah, his references cannot be used legitimately to prove its historical character. The utterances themselves contain nothing that would in any way throw light on the question, and the point of his teaching remains the same whether the book is history, or parable, or allegory. There is, however, one consideration in connection with Jesus's utterances that favors the *nonhistorical* interpretation. The defenders of the *historical* view are compelled to admit that the repentance and conversion of the Ninevites were without permanent results. Says Huxtable, "The impression, like that made by Elijah on Israel, was no doubt as superficial and short-lived as it was for the moment marked by passionate earnestness." Over against this it should be noted that the words of Jesus imply that the repentance and conversion of the Ninevites were permanent; its results were to be manifested in the day of judgment to the confounding of those listening to one greater than Jonah. Indeed, the validity and significance of our Lord's argument is closely bound up with this permanence; it is completely invalidated by the admission that the Ninevites soon relapsed into their wickedness. Similarly, the Book of Jonah represents the conversion of the Ninevites as real and permanent; else how could it have been acceptable to Jehovah and caused him to withhold the judgment? But if the book is to be taken as historical the silence of the entire Old Testament concerning this remarkable conversion and the extensive information furnished by the inscriptions concerning life in Assyria during the eighth century B. C. create a serious historical difficulty (see further p. 322). On the other hand, if the book is an allegory or parable this difficulty disappears, for these forms of literature retain their value though they may not be based upon actual historical events. To say the least, therefore, the New Testament references to the Book of Jonah *fail to establish* the historical character of the book. 6. Whether the origin, contents, and tendency of the book become incomprehensible with the *didactic* interpretation of the same will be seen later in the discussion,

as also, 7, the justice or injustice of the statement that the objections to the historical interpretation are based upon unwarranted assumptions and an unjustifiable denial of the supernatural.

In an address published in *Bible Student and Teacher,* Sept., 1905, Rev. John Urquhart mentions another argument in favor of the historical interpretation: "Of all parables this was the most impossible to any Jewish writer. For what are the contents of the book? An Israelitish prophet, with regard to whom we have the distinct assurance that he prophesied to the Ten Tribes, and that he uttered predictions that were verified. Now, here is a book given to us by the ministry of that Israelitish prophet that has not a single particle of Israelitish ministry in it from beginning to end. This man is confined to whom? To a Gentile people. It has for its sphere what? Not any city of Israel, but the city of Nineveh, the capital of the great opponent of the Ten Tribes of Israel. And the whole scene is confined to his ministry in regard to that Gentile people, and the Gentile people are the object of divine commiseration, and Jonah himself is the object of divine complaint, if not of condemnation. Now, I say it was another (*sic!* = an utter?) impossibility that any Jewish mind would have conceived fiction after that pattern. It would have been to the glorification of Israel and not to the glorification of Nineveh. It would have been to the setting forth of God's fierce anger against the Gentile people, and not his commiseration toward the destroyer of the people of God."

The present writer does not profess to know what a Jewish mind "could" or "would" have conceived or written; and yet for the sake of argument it may be admitted that no ordinary "Jewish mind would have conceived fiction after that pattern." Why? Because the ordinary Jewish mind seems to have failed to appreciate the lofty conception of the character of Jehovah implied in the Book of Jonah. The truth of this statement is confirmed by the utterances of all the prophets, who sought to give to the people this loftier conception, and by the utter-

ances of Jesus himself. It was on account of this narrow exclusiveness that Jehovah *inspired* a "Jewish mind" with a loftier conception of himself and impelled this "inspired Jewish mind" to present to his contemporaries in the Book of Jonah a more adequate conception of the character of Jehovah. This, as we can see from the parables of Jesus, might be done by the use of a parable as well as by the use of an historical narrative.

Thus far our investigation has been confined to an examination of the arguments in favor of the historical interpretation, and it has been found that *they fail to establish their point.*

What, then, are the arguments advanced against the historical, in favor of the didactic, interpretation? 1. If the conversion of the Ninevites to Jehovah took place on the scale recorded in the Book of Jonah, it is one of the most marvelous events in human history, and certainly the most marvelous event in Hebrew history. Such event would have furnished Hebrew prophets with abundant material with which to emphasize their earnest appeals for repentance to their contemporaries, and with which to support their frequent denunciations of Nineveh. Surely it is not without reason that one writer asks, "On what principle is the silence about such a remarkable fact of the Book of Kings, and the silence of such prophets as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Nahum, Zephaniah, to be accounted for?" 2. The statement of Layard has often been quoted in favor of the historical view: "I have known a Christian priest to frighten a whole Mussulman town to tents and repentance, by publicly proclaiming that he had received a divine commission to announce a common earthquake or plague." But neither the book itself nor the use of the incident by the Master permits the placing of the conversion of the Ninevites on the same level as this temporary, superficial, and superstitious turning to God. If, however, the conversion was as far-reaching as the Book of Jonah would indicate, such wholesale conversion of a world city like Nineveh from heathenism to the worship of Jehovah, as the result of the preaching of a single individual,

is without analogy in the religious history of the world. 3. The Old Testament everywhere represents the Ninevites as idolaters, and gives no indication that any time they worshiped Jehovah. 4. The history of Assyria and Nineveh during the eighth century B. C. is well known from the inscriptions, at least in its broad outlines; and yet nowhere is there even the slightest hint of a religious revolution such as is described in the Book of Jonah. The kings of Assyria during the period of Jonah are fairly well known, and it is not easy to imagine a monarch of the type depicted in the Assyrian inscriptions behaving as the king of Nineveh is represented in the Book of Jonah. 5. From the time of Ashur-nasir-pal (about 880 B.C.) to the time of Sennacherib, whose reign began in 705 B. C.—the date of Jonah being about 770—Nineveh does not seem to have been the capital of Assyria, but Calah. "For nearly two centuries Calah remained the capital, and it was only under Sennacherib that Nineveh resumed its place as the chief city of the empire" (Sayce). 6. The size of the city and the number of the inhabitants are said not to be in accord with the modern measurements of the site (see p. 317 and on iii, 3). 7. The very structure of the narrative seems to indicate the *didactic* character of the book. The author introduces just such details as serve to illustrate this purpose; had his primary object been history, his silence concerning several points would be peculiar. "He says nothing of the sins of which Nineveh was guilty, nor of the journey of the prophet to Nineveh, nor does he mention the place where he was cast out upon the land, nor the name of the Assyrian king. In any case, if the narrative were intended to be historical, it would be incomplete by the frequent fact that the circumstances which are necessary for the connection of events are mentioned later than they happened, and *only where attention has to be directed to them* as having already happened." Here should be noted also the abrupt close of the story. The author, having pointed out, so to speak, the moral of the story, has no occasion to pursue the narrative further. "Indeed, throughout the book the truths

it enforces are always pushed more to the front than the facts." Baudissin has also called attention to the symmetrical structure of the book as indicating that the author was not concerned primarily with the narration of history as such, but with the artistic and forceful arrangement of certain material at his command for didactic purposes. As illustrations he mentions the similarity in the opening words of the two main divisions of the book (i, 1, 2; iii, 1, 2); the words of the ship captain and of the king of Nineveh (i, 6; iii, 9). Twice Jonah desires death in almost identical words (iv, 3, 8); twice he is reproved by Jehovah in the same language (iv, 4, 9); etc. 8. Professor Ladd (*What Is the Bible?* p. 84) calls attention to another objection in these words: "A narrative in which a man is represented as composing a poetical prayer, surrounded with water, his head bound with seaweed, and drifting with marine currents, while inside a monster of the sea, was surely never intended by its author to be understood as literal history." 9. So far no reference has been made to the miraculous element in the book; the objections enumerated are principally historical; and, though some students may consider them more weighty than others, it must not be forgotten that no interpretation which fails to take them into consideration can be regarded as satisfactory. There must be mentioned now one other objection, and it is based upon the miraculous element in the book. Here one must move very cautiously. The accusation has been frequently made that disbelief in miracles or in the supernatural is the chief ground for denying the historical character of the book (see p. 316). "But for them (the miracles) it may well be doubted whether anyone would ever have taken the Book of Jonah to be anything but history" (Perowne). This sweeping accusation is unwarranted and unjust; for there are many devout commentators who entertain no doubts concerning the reality of the supernatural, or the possibility of miracles, who nevertheless doubt the historicity of the Book of Jonah; and when such men assert that their attitude on this question is not due

to a disbelief in miracles it is certainly unfair and unchristian to accuse them either of falsehood or of self-deception. Says Dr. Dale, "I receive without a shadow of doubt many miraculous stories of actual facts, but this book, on the whole, looks to me unlike a story of actual facts." Again, it should be noted that the defenders of the historical interpretation center the question of the supernatural and miraculous around the ability of a fish to swallow a man. Urquhart, having proved, as has been done many times before him, that a certain kind of whale can easily swallow a man, exclaims in triumph, "And who will tell me now that the whale is not able to swallow a prophet; that there isn't a whale in all the seas able to swallow Jonah? It could have swallowed six Jonahs and given them up again."

As a matter of fact, the swallowing of Jonah is only one comparatively unimportant incident in the narrative; and it may be readily admitted that any one of several kinds of fish might swallow a human being. It is not the impossibility of miracles, or the presence of any one miracle—not even one of those much more startling than the swallowing of Jonah—that is urged against the historical interpretation, but the long succession, in such small compass, of a considerable number of miracles. There is a miracle at every step. The disobedient prophet is pursued by a miraculously wrought tempest; the lot is miraculously directed to Jonah; the prophet is cast overboard and immediately the storm ceases. To preserve the life of the prophet, immediately a great fish appears; without injury Jonah passes into his belly; there he is miraculously kept alive for three days and three nights, when, as Luther remarked, "in three hours he might have been digested and changed into the nature, flesh, and blood of that monster." In the fish's belly his mind remains clear enough to compose a song of thanksgiving; then at the divine command he is cast upon the dry land. Greatest wonder of all, at the preaching of Jonah the whole wicked city of Nineveh immediately repents and turns to Jehovah. A "gourd" is

made to spring up in one night; in one night it is caused to wither; and, finally, Jehovah causes an east wind to blow. Here are twelve miracles recorded in a book of forty-eight verses. Is there anything like it anywhere in sacred writ? That God *might* have done these things is not and need not be questioned; whether God *did* do it is a question of evidence. The fact that nowhere else in divine economy, even in connection with much more serious religious crises, is there any indication of such lavish use of miracles raises the question in this case.

To say that the statements in the book itself put the subject beyond doubt is begging the question, since it is not yet proved that the book is *intended* to record history.

The difficulties felt with regard to the miraculous element in the book may be summarized thus: (1) The miraculous character of the book from beginning to end is unique in the sacred literature of the Bible; (2) the book presents no crisis demanding this *extraordinary* display of divine power; (3) so far as we know the processes of the divine economy, the miracles of the Book of Jonah are without parallel.

The defenders of the historical view seem to be conscious of a peculiarity or difficulty, for, strange to say, almost without exception they seek to *minimize* the miraculous element and to explain the events, as much as possible, as due to natural causes. In this attempt some have not hesitated to force the text into saying things far removed from the clear meaning of the words. Even Henry Clay Trumbull, in his attempt to establish at least the possibility of the historical character of the book, has fallen into this error. But it is significant that he is conscious of the extraordinary character of the miraculous in the book; for he asks, "Where in the New Testament or in the Old Testament except in the Book of Jonah is there such a seemingly unnecessary miracle as the saving of a man's life by having him swallowed in a fish, instead, say, of having the vessel that carried him driven back by contrary winds to the place of its starting?"

These are the nine most important reasons urged against the historical interpretation. That they amount to a mathematical demonstration of the nonhistorical character of the book is not and need not be claimed. In questions of this kind such demonstration is impossible, especially when external evidence is absent. The exact weight of these arguments may be variously estimated by different readers, but that some of them possess considerable weight cannot be denied. At any rate, the most careful students of the Book of Jonah are almost universally agreed that the primary purpose of the book is not historical, but didactic. With some this conviction is the result of a careful consideration of the facts enumerated; with others it seems to be the outgrowth of their general intellectual and spiritual development. Of the latter class is Dr. Dale, who writes: "If you ask me why I have come to this conclusion, I should answer: Very much in the same way in which you have come to the conclusion that the *Pilgrim's Progress* is a work of the imagination. When we know what real life is, Bunyan's story does not look to us like a story of real life. And so quite apart from the story of the great fish which swallowed Jonah, and which after three days discharged him alive on the dry land, this book does not look to me like a plain story of events which really happened."

Teaching of the Book.

When the conclusion is reached that the Book of Jonah is primarily didactic, the question remains, what is the teaching of the book? To this question various answers have been given from time to time. Among the more prominent views are the following: Ewald thinks that the aim of the book is to teach the truth that "true fear and repentance bring salvation from Jehovah." When the sailors give Jehovah alone the glory they are saved; when the Ninevites forsake their evil ways and turn to Jehovah their doom is averted. Chapter iv, he thinks, teaches that the ultimate basis of this truth is to be found in Jehovah himself. It "makes evident the supreme

divine love as the true and necessary basis of the above redemption of the penitent of all classes without exception." Hitzig ascribes to the book an apologetic purpose. It seeks to justify the prophets for the nonfulfillment of their oracles against the heathen nations by pointing out that the prophets did not speak of themselves, but under divine compulsion; therefore, if any justification is needed it is needed by God, who is behind the prophet. At the same time it seeks to justify God and to silence all complaints arising out of the nonfulfillment of these oracles (iv, 10, 11). Vatke's view is almost identical with this. Similarly Riehm: "The practical purpose of the little book is to give instruction as to the proper attitude toward prophetic threats; they are to be respected as God's words, which the prophet must proclaim even against his own will; but their fulfillment may be averted by repentance, and when this has happened no exception must be taken to the nonfulfillment of the divine message." This purpose the book fulfills by showing, (1) that a prophet must carry out any commission imposed upon him; that neither his own efforts nor external circumstances can excuse him from doing his duty (chapters i, ii); (2) that God is not absolutely bound to fulfill the threat uttered by the prophet; even heathen nations, if they repent, may be shown mercy (chapter iii), and in this manifestation of mercy God is perfectly justified (chapter iv). As another illustration of the difference of opinion may be mentioned the view formerly held by Volck. He saw in the book an attempt to set forth the true nature of the prophetic calling. "We learn from it, (1) that the prophet must perform what God commands him, however unusual it appears; (2) that even death cannot nullify his calling; (3) that the prophet has no right to the fulfillment of his prediction, but must place it in God's hand."

There is an element of truth in all these views; all the lessons mentioned *may* be learned from the book; but the views indicated fail to emphasize sufficiently that which seems to be the very heart of the matter. In some respects the Book

of Jonah reaches the sublimest heights of Old Testament religion. A general idea of its worth is given in these words of Cornill: "This apparently trivial book is one of the deepest and grandest that was ever written, and I should like to say to everyone that approaches it, 'Take off thy shoes, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.' In this book Israelitish prophecy quits the scene of battle as victor, and as victor in its severest struggle—that against itself."

What, then, gives to the little book this significance? What is the lesson that "runs like a red thread through the whole and at last becomes a knot whose unloosing in iv, 10, 11, forms the glorious finale"? It is the *universality of the divine plan of redemption.* Nowhere else in the Old Testament is such a continued stress laid upon the fatherhood of God, embracing in its infinite love the whole human race. The Book of Jonah is indeed a "missionary book," teaching that God does not wish that "any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Some of the postexilic writings of the Old Testament indicate that there was growing among the Jews an exclusive, particularistic tendency (see on Joel, p. 149), which produced the idea that salvation was *for* the Jews only, an idea against which early Christianity had to battle with all her might. To counteract this narrow Jewish particularism is the aim of the Book of Jonah; to show that it was a false assumption that Jehovah would save only the Jews and destroy all other nations. "The national limits of the old covenant are here wondrously broken through; the entire heathen world opens as a mission field to the messengers of Jehovah. Thus the book with its wide-hearted outlook on God's ways, and the sharp criticism of the selfish spirit of the Jewish people, as a didactic work, is itself a miracle in the literature of this people." No one but a prophet, filled with the spirit of Jehovah, could have written this, the most *Christian* of all Old Testament books.

If this central lesson is once recognized it matters little whether the book is called a prophetic parable, or an allegory, or an historico-symbolic prophecy, or even a *Midrash.* It is

of little consequence whether it is a parabolic history of all Israel, as Kleinert, Cheyne, C. H. H. Wright, G. A. Smith, and others seem to think, or is understood as describing and condemning only a party in the postexilic community. Nor does it make much difference whether it is, so far as the narrative part is concerned, entirely a product of the imagination, or an elaboration of certain traditions centering around the prophet Jonah mentioned in 2 Kings xiv, 25; it does not matter even if it could be shown that the author drew upon mythology for the figure of the "great fish."

If the book is an allegory of Israel's history Jonah symbolizes the nation. Israel had received a divine commission to make known Jehovah to all the earth (Isa. xlii, 5-9; Gen. xii, 3; compare Jonah i, 1, 2); but Israel was disobedient and failed to carry out the divine purpose (Isa. xlii, 19-24; compare Jonah i, 3, 4), and in consequence was swallowed up by the "monster" (Jer. li, 34; compare Jonah i, 17; the word translated "monster" in Jeremiah is translated "sea monster" in Gen. i, 21; Job vii, 12, etc.). In exile Israel turned to Jehovah (that the exile would have this effect is stated again and again in the prophetic writings; compare Jonah ii, 1ff.); then Israel was delivered from the "monster" (Jer. li, 44; Ezra i, 1ff.; compare Jonah ii, 10). The duration of Israel's judgment is represented by Hosea as lasting three days (see on Hos. vi, 2; compare Jonah i, 17).

While the exile brought the Israelites, in some measure, to their senses, they were not entirely cured. Their mission was not revoked; it remained their duty to carry the knowledge of Jehovah to the ends of the earth. But Israel remained silent. There were many who were thinking of the nations as doomed; they were displeased because the threats of the preëxilic prophets remained unfulfilled. To teach such the folly and wickedness of their attitude is the aim of chapters iii, iv.

This may be the correct view. On the other hand, the coincidences with the earlier history may be purely accidental.

The author may have in mind only the unspiritual Israelites of the postexilic period; and the purpose underlying the book may be to convince these of the iniquity of their selfish particularism and to give them a more adequate vision of the divine purpose. In this case Jonah would represent not the whole nation, but only the unspiritual portion of the postexilic community; yet the chief lessons of the book would remain the same.

Budde, accepting, on the whole, the latter view of the teaching of the book, that it is directed "against the impatience of the Jewish believers who are fretting because, notwithstanding all predictions, the anti-theocratic world empire has not yet been destroyed, because Jehovah is still postponing his judgment upon the heathen, giving them further time for repentance. Jehovah, it is hinted, is hoping that they will turn from their sins in the eleventh hour; and he has compassion for the innocent ones who would perish with the guilty," believes that the Book of Jonah is a *Midrash*, that is, an imaginative development of a thought or theme suggested by Scripture, a didactic or homiletic exposition, an edifying religious story. He thinks that the book is a section of a *Midrash* on the Books of Kings, either that mentioned in 2 Chron. xxiv, 27, or one otherwise unknown; and he suggests that the passage underlying it is 2 Kings xiv, 25-27, the only Old Testament passage in which Jonah is mentioned. "The author of the Book of Kings puts into Jehovah's mouth warm words of mercy toward the northern kingdom. It is easy to see how a *Midrash* might be added showing that his mercy extended even to an alien, heathen empire." Budde's suggestion is worthy of consideration, but it cannot be regarded as fully established. It is, indeed, doubtful that the *Midrash* used by the Chronicler was permeated by the universalistic spirit so prominent in the Book of Jonah. Nevertheless, it is not impossible that the author secured the narrative material for the work from such *Midrash*. But these are all secondary questions.

Whatever the final conclusion as to the kind of literature to which the little book belongs, the significance of its teaching will in no wise be affected. It must ever be considered as reaching the summit of Old Testament vision. "In no book of the Old Testament," says Bleek, "is the all-embracing father-love of God, which has no respect for person or nation, but is moved to mercy toward all who turn to him, exhibited with equal impressiveness, or in a manner so nearly approaching the spirit of Christianity."

The Date of the Book.

If the interpretation of the book suggested in the two preceding sections is correct, it follows almost inevitably that the Book of Jonah was not written by the prophet bearing that name; that its origin must be assigned to a period separated from the time of the prophet by several centuries. Indeed, to such late date the book is assigned by all commentators who interpret the book as having primarily a didactic purpose. But even some of the defenders of the historical view believe that the book was not written by Jonah. Says Harman, "The language seems altogether inconsistent with such an early date, and would indicate a period just before, or soon after, the Babylonian captivity." Defenders of the authorship of Jonah rarely advance specific reasons for their belief; they are content with pointing out that there is nothing in the book to prove that Jonah was not the author. Beardslee advances five reasons, two of which have no bearing on the question of authorship; the remaining three are: 1. Its place among the Minor Prophets. 2. "All details of the narrative lead us to regard it as a personal record." 3. "The tone of the book . . . is more in harmony with Jonah's time than with the later postexilic period." The weakness of these arguments can be shown best by considering the arguments on the other side.

The question of date must be determined wholly on the basis of internal evidence; for the position of the book in the

collection of the Minor Prophets proves nothing (see Joel, p. 130; Obadiah, p. 287); it certainly does *not* prove that the compilers of the canon "were firmly convinced that the prophet Jonah was the author." Its didactic character would make the *prophetic* collection its only suitable place; its brevity would secure for it a position among the *Minor* Prophets, and its mention of the prophet Jonah would determine its admission among the books considered the *earlier*. Jewish tradition is silent concerning the authorship, perhaps, because it took for granted that Jonah was the author. "In the Talmudic period," remarks Fürst, "the question respecting its author was left altogether undecided."

It remains, then, to consider the arguments—aside from what has been said in the preceding sections—in favor of the late date of the book:

1. *The Literary Arguments*.—(1) Jonah is nowhere mentioned as the author; he is always spoken of in the third person, except where the author places in his mouth direct utterances (i, 9; ii, 2ff., etc.). While this use of the third person does not establish diversity of authorship, it certainly does not militate against it; and Koenig calls attention to the fact that Hosea, who also opens with the third person (i, 3ff.), in the course of the story passes to the first (iii, 1ff.). (2) "Although there are many vivid details, they are such as might be suggested by ordinary experiences, a storm at sea or exposure to the sun; *there are none of those casual allusions to time, place, or person which we expect in a man's account of his own experiences.*"

2. *The Linguistic Argument*.—(For a general estimate of the linguistic argument see on Joel, p. 137.) It is generally admitted that the Book of Jonah contains several linguistic peculiarities, especially Aramaisms; but concerning the explanation of these and their bearing upon the question of authorship opinions have differed very widely. Keil is content with saying that none of the unusual words and expressions "can *with certainty* be said not to belong to the old Hebrew

modes of expression." Others point out on the basis of the Book of Hosea that the dialect of the north differed from that of the south, and that, the northern kingdom being nearer the territory in which the Aramaic was spoken, it would not be strange if in the language spoken there Aramaic elements were found, even at an early period. Were the peculiarities fewer in number, this might serve as a sufficient explanation; but when so many peculiarities are found crowded in so short a space, it seems, to say the least, more reasonable to explain them as due to the fact that, when the Book of Jonah was written, the literary language of the Hebrews had already been considerably influenced by the Aramaic. That takes us down to the period of or after the exile. (A list of these expressions may be seen in Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible,* ii, p. 748; Driver, *Introduction,* p. 322.)

3. *The Theological Argument.*—All, including those who defend the historical interpretation, admit that the book has a didactic purpose. Now, if any one of the views concerning the teaching mentioned above (pp. 327ff.) is correct, the theological ideas expressed and the general tone of the book favor a period subsequent to the activity of the great pre-exilic prophets. For the expression of its ideas no period was more suitable than that after the exile, when a living voice was needed to counteract the particularistic tendencies of the age (see on Joel, p. 149).

4. *The Historical Argument.*—(1) Nineveh enjoyed its greatest splendor subsequent to the time of Jonah, but even during its most flourishing period it did not reach the extent suggested in iii, 3 (see there and p. 317). It would seem, therefore, that one familiar with the city from personal observation could hardly use the terms employed in the book; on the other hand, they would not appear strange if the author had never seen the city, if he wrote after the destruction of Nineveh in 607-606, and was dependent for information upon oral tradition or upon a late *Midrash.* (2) Driver suggests that the "non-mention of the name of the Assyrian king, who

played such a prominent part in chapter iii, may be taken as an indication that it was not known to the author of the book." (3) "King of Nineveh" as a title of the kings of Assyria is very unusual. The conservative archæologist Sayce remarks that this title could never have been applied to the kings of Assyria while the Assyrian empire was still in existence; and this conclusion is supported by the exhaustive study, by Professor Wilson, of the titles of the Assyrian kings found in the inscriptions and in the Old Testament (*Princeton Review,* July, 1904 and 1905). (4) The definite statement in iii, 3, "Nineveh *was* an exceeding great city." It has been attempted to weaken the force of this tense by calling it a "synchronistic imperfect"; Jonah looking back to his first impression of the city says that Nineveh was a great city—that is, at the time when Jonah first saw it. In support of this interpretation reference is made to Gen. i, 2, where the same tense is used, "and the earth *was* waste and void." But this passage rather confirms the interpretation that the greatness of the city was a thing of the past; to the author of Gen. i, 2, the earth was no longer waste and void.

5. *The Argument from Literary Parallels.*—The Book of Jonah presents many literary parallels with other Old Testament writings. With iii, 9, compare Joel ii, 14; with iv, 2, compare Exod. xxxiv, 6, Joel ii, 13, Psa. lxxxvi, 15, ciii, 8. More marked are the parallels exhibited by the prayer in ii, 2-9: with verse 2 compare Psa. xviii, 5, 6, cxx, 1; with verse 3 compare Psa. xlii, 7, xviii, 4, 5; with verse 4 compare Psa. xxxi, 22, Lam. iii, 54; with verse 5 compare Psa. xviii, 4, lxix, 1, cxvi, 3; with verse 7 compare Psa. cxlii, 3; with verse 9 compare Psa. iii, 8, l, 14. These numerous resemblances cannot be due to accident; the only natural explanation is that the author of the prayer adopted and adapted passages from the psalms with which he was familiar, though it would be incorrect to consider the prayer merely a string of quotations. Some of the psalms used are certainly later than the age of the prophet Jonah. Consequently the literary parallels also

point to a late date for the composition of the Book of Jonah, or at least of the prayer (see below).

These five lines of argument all point in the same direction, namely, that the book was not composed by the prophet Jonah, and that the date of the book is several centuries later than the age of the prophet. How late, it may be impossible to decide definitely. If the dates of the psalms quoted could be determined absolutely, or if it were beyond doubt that the author quoted Joel, this might be done with greater assurance. But the whole question of the dates of the psalms is one of peculiar uncertainty, and the resemblances with Joel are not of the character to establish direct dependence of the one author upon the other. We need not be surprised, therefore, to find that, while nearly all scholars are agreed on a late date, there exists great diversity of opinion when they come to fix the exact period of writing. Kleinert thinks of the exile; Ewald, of the sixth or fifth century; Driver, of the fifth; Von Orelli, of the latter part of the Chaldean or the earlier part of the Persian period; Cornill, of the close of the Persian or the early years of the Greek period; Nowack, after Joel; G. A. Smith, probably about 300; Marti, about 300 or the third century; Koenig, not later than 300; Hitzig, the Maccabean age; etc. If the prophetic canon was completed, as is now generally thought, about 200 B. C., the Book of Jonah cannot be of a later date; and if the interpretation of its teaching set forth in this commentary is correct, it is probably not earlier than the reforms under Ezra and Nehemiah, which to some extent were responsible for the rise of the particularism condemned in the book. Hence the date of the Book of Jonah may be placed somewhere between 450 and 200 B. C.

The arguments from literary parallels, based upon ii, 2-9, are of value in determining the date of the whole book only if the "prayer" formed a part of the book in its original form. This raises the question concerning the unity of the book, and especially concerning the relation of the "prayer" (ii, 2-9)

to the rest of the book. Against the prayer being an original part of the book it is urged that it is not suitable in its present position, that it is not appropriate in the mouth of Jonah while he was in the belly of the fish, but only after he had been cast out upon the dry land; hence it would be more suitable after ii, 10. This being so, the author of the book, were he also the author of the prayer, would undoubtedly have placed it after ii, 10. These considerations have led most recent commentators to regard the prayer a later addition, made by some one who may have "found the psalm ready-made and in a collection where it was perhaps attributed to Jonah, who inserted it after verse 2 (Eng. verse 1), which records that Jonah did pray from the belly of the fish, and inserted it there more readily because it seemed right for a book which had found its place among the Twelve Prophets to contribute, as all the others did, some actual discourse of the prophet whose name it bore."

While there is some weight in the arguments advanced in favor of this view, others hold that it is not necessary to deny the prayer to the author of the rest of the book. Whether he composed the prayer or found it "ready-made" may be difficult to determine, nor is that of much consequence; but it is quite conceivable, they say, that he inserted it in the book and gave to it its present place. The author knew, when he wrote i, 17, that his hero would be saved, for he stated that God "prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah." As soon as Jonah had entered the belly of the fish he was safe—from the viewpoint of the author—and a song of thanksgiving was in order. "Given the fish," says G. A. Smith, "and the divine purpose of the fish, the psalm is intelligible and appears in its proper place." Absolute certainty on this point may be impossible. That the prayer was not composed by the author of the Book of Jonah is quite likely, for he would probably have selected expressions more suitable to the condition of his hero; on the other hand, it cannot be regarded as certain that it was not he who inserted it in the book.

A few attempts have been made to prove that, even aside from the prayer, the book is a compilation from several different sources. Nachtigal distinguished three sources, the oldest being the prayer, which was thought to have been uttered by Jonah "after God had delivered him out of the hand of the king of Assyria." To it were added chapters iii, iv by an exile in Babylonia, and still later i, 1-17; ii, 1, 10, by a contemporary of Ezra and Nehemiah. Koehler also thought that he could discover an early and a late stratum. Boehme, after careful examination, reached the conclusion—based upon what he considered contradictions in the narrative, differences in the language, the use of different divine names, etc.—that the work of four hands may be distinguished in the book, besides a few minor later additions. He distributed the contents among the contributors as follows: (1) A, the author of the kernel of chapters i—iv; (2) B, the author of the narrative, found in chapters iii, iv—in some instances parallel with the second part of A, in others differing from it; (3) R, the redactor who combined A and B; (4) the reviser who expanded ABR in chapters i and iv, and inserted the prayer composed by an unknown poet; (5) a few smaller additions, the latest of which is i, 8a, subsequent to the LXX. translation. The oldest of these sources (A) Boehme assigned to the fourth or third pre-Christian century. Compare also *Zeitschrift fuer die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft,* 1905, pp. 285ff. These various attempts to disprove the unity of the book have not been favorably received by scholars, the common opinion being that, with the possible exception of the prayer, the Book of Jonah is a unit—that it is substantially what it was when it left the hands of the author.

One other question needs to be considered, namely, whether, so far as the narrative portions are concerned, the book is entirely a work of imagination or not; and if not, where the author found the material out of which he constructed his narrative. Hitzig, Cornill, and others consider the narrative portions purely a work of imagination. Other commentators

have thought that they could discover in it traces of ancient myths, either Greek or Babylonian. Thus the book has been connected with the myth of Hercules, who delivered Hesione, the daughter of King Laomedon, from a sea monster; and with that of Perseus, who is said to have freed Andromeda from a monster near the city of Joppa. There is, however, little similarity with these myths, and it is highly improbable that there is any connection between them and the story of Jonah. In more recent times the "great fish" has been connected with Babylonian mythology. F. C. Baur suggested that *Jonah* had some connection with the Babylonian *Oannes,* mentioned by Berosus. Cheyne and others suspect a dependence upon the Babylonian *Tiamat* myths. Marti calls attention also to the Buddhist story of Mittavindaka, and to an Egyptian legend of the third pre-Christian century. All of these contain certain resemblances to the narrative concerning Jonah, but a direct connection between the latter and any one of these myths and legends is more than improbable. On the other hand, there may be some indirect connection between the "great fish" and *Tiamat,* other reflections of which may be seen in the Old Testament figures of Rahab (Isa. li, 9; Psa. lxxxix, 10), and Leviathan (Isa. xxvii, 1; Job iii, 8; compare also Jer. li, 34, 44; Tob. vi, 3ff.). If this were so, the rest of the story might still be a work of imagination.

But this raises the question, why should the author make his imaginary story center around the name Jonah? Cheyne replies, because "the custom was springing up of calling Israel, symbolically, a dove" (Psa. lxviii, 13), whose Hebrew name is identical with the proper name Jonah. He finds no connection between this figure *Jonah* and the Jonah of 2 Kings xiv, 25. By why is this "dove" called a prophet? Because, he replies, the mission of Israel, which is symbolized by the "dove," is a prophetic mission (Isa. liv, 13, margin; compare xlii, 4, etc.). A different explanation is favored by G. A. Smith: "In history Jonah appears only as concerned with Israel's reconquest of her lands from the heathen. Did the

author of the book say: I will take such a man, one to whom tradition attributes no outlook beyond Israel's own territories, for none could be so typical of Israel, narrow, selfish, and with no love for the world beyond herself?"

If the narrative portion of the book must be regarded as purely a work of the imagination, Smith's answer is more natural and satisfactory than that of Cheyne. There are many, however, who think that the narrative is not purely imaginative, that the author of the Book of Jonah owes much of his material—just how much it may be impossible to say—to tradition; and that the narrative centers around Jonah because the traditions utilized centered around the prophet Jonah. The traditions may have told of a journey of the prophet to Nineveh, of a shipwreck and other experiences, or of a discourse uttered by him against the great Assyrian city. This material the author cast into literary form in such a manner as to set forcibly before his readers the truths he desired them to take to heart.

For an appreciation of the permanent religious value of the book, however, it matters little whether the narrative is entirely a work of the imagination or not, and if not, whence the author received his material. The narrative is only the garment in which the author clothed the truth, which is the substance; the latter is the all-important. It certainly is not a product of the imagination, nor is it derived from tradition; it is a divine truth, impressed upon the heart and mind of the author by the Spirit of the living God.

JONAH.

CHAPTER I.

NOW the word of the LORD came unto [a] [1]Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, 2 Arise, go to Nineveh, that [b]great city, and cry against it; for [c]their [c]wickedness is come up before me. 3 But Jonah [d]rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence

[a] 2 Kings 14. 25.——[1] Called, Matt. 12. 39, *Jonas*.——[b] Gen. 10. 11, 12; chaps. 3. 2, 3; 4. 11.——[c] Gen. 18, 20 21: Ezra 9. 6; James 5. 4; Rev. 18. 5.——[d] Chap. 4. 2.

CHAPTER I.

JONAH'S COMMISSION; HIS DISOBEDIENCE AND PUNISHMENT, 1–16.

Jonah, the son of Amittai, is commissioned by Jehovah to preach to the Ninevites (i, 1, 2); he disobeys and embarks on a vessel sailing in the opposite direction (3). A severe tempest arises which threatens to destroy the vessel; to save it the sailors cast the cargo overboard (4, 5). The captain appeals to Jonah to pray to his God for help (6). When the tempest continues the sailors decide to find out by lot on whose account the calamity has befallen them. The lot falls on Jonah (7). On inquiry he tells that he is a servant of Jehovah (8, 9). The information fills them with fear, but when no relief comes they finally cast him overboard (10–15). The sea becomes calm, and the sailors worship Jehovah (16).

Jonah's commission and disobedience, 1–3.

Unlike the majority of the other Minor Prophets, the Book of Jonah has no formal title, verse 1 being an integral part of the narrative (compare Hag. i, 1; Zech. i, 1). **Now**—Literally, *And*. The prophecy of Ezekiel and several of the historical books begin in the same manner. The occurrence of this "and" is one reason why the Book of Jonah has been considered an extract from a larger book (see p. 331), the beginning of which is omitted. The exact force of "and" is not clear, but the above conclusion is warranted no more in this case than it would be in the case of Ezekiel. **Word of Jehovah**—See on Hos. i, 1; Joel i, 1. **Came**—How, is not stated. **Jonah the son of Amittai**—See p. 311. 2. The commission. **Nineveh**—One of the chief cities of the Assyrian empire. It is mentioned as early as 2700 B. C. in the inscriptions of Gudea of Lagas. So far as we know, it became a royal residence about 1100 B. C., and it continued to be such until the reign of Ashur-nasir-pal (about 880 B. C.), when Calah was rebuilt. It resumed its chief place under Sennacherib (705–681), and for nearly a century its glory and magnificence continued, until it was destroyed in 607–606 (compare the prophecy of Nahum). Its ruins consist chiefly of two great mounds, *Kouyunjik* and *Nebi Yunus*, on the eastern shore of the Tigris, north of the greater Zab, opposite the modern town of Mosul. **Great**—In size and power (see on iii, 3; compare iii, 2; iv, 11). **Cry against**—Implies that his message is to be one of judgment (chapters iii, iv). **Their wickedness is come up before me**—Their iniquity is so great that tidings of it have reached even to heaven, the dwelling place of Jehovah (Gen. xviii, 21; 1 Sam. v, 12). He can endure it no longer.

3. Jonah proceeds on his journey, but in the opposite direction. **Tarshish**—This city has been identified with Tarsus in Cilicia, the home of the

of the LORD, and went down to [e]Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish [f]from the presence of the LORD.

4 But [g]the LORD [2]sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was [3]like to be broken. 5 Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god, and [h]cast forth the wares that *were* in the ship into the sea, to lighten *it*

[e] Josh. 19. 46; 2 Chron. 2. 16; Acts 9. 36.—[f] Gen. 4. 16; Job 1. 12; 2. 7.—[g] Psa. 107. 25.

[2] Heb. *cast forth.*—[3] Heb. *thought to be broken.*—[h] So Acts 27. 18, 19, 38.

apostle Paul; but it should be identified with *Tartessus*, a Phœnician colony in southwest Spain, not far from Gibraltar. Nineveh was in the far east, Tarshish appears to have been the most distant city toward the west then known. The author evidently desires to represent Jonah as attempting to get away from his mission as far as possible. **From the presence of Jehovah**—The prophet is anxious to get out of God's sight, lest God, seeing him, might be reminded of the commission imposed. The motive leading to the flight is indicated in iv, 2. The expression goes back to a time when it was actually thought that removal from the land of the Hebrews was removal from the presence of Jehovah (1 Sam. xxvi, 19; compare Dan. vi, 10). At the time when the Book of Jonah was written the phrase had lost its older, primitive significance, for the omnipresence of Jehovah had long been recognized (see Amos, p. 207). Nevertheless, it continued to be used in a figurative sense. **Joppa**—One of the harbors on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean, which from ancient times has served as a seaport of Jerusalem (2 Chron. ii, 16; Ezra iii, 7). It is still a flourishing town; Cheyne says (*Encyclopædia Biblica*) that its population was estimated in 1897 at over thirty-five thousand; but Mackie (Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible*) estimates its population at "about eight thousand." The present name of the city is *Yāfā*, Eng. *Jaffa*. The city is the western terminus of the Jaffa-Jerusalem railway. There Jonah found a ship which was ready to sail; he paid the fare and set out for Tarshish; but Jehovah overtook him.

Jonah's punishment, 4–16.

4, 5. **Great wind . . . mighty tempest**—Two synonymous expressions. The statement is repeated to indicate the fierceness of the tempest. **Jehovah sent out**—Literally, *hurled* (verses 5, 12, 15). The verb is used of the casting of the spear (1 Sam. xviii, 11; xx, 33). The tempest was the weapon of the divine wrath (see on Amos iii, 6; also concluding remarks on Amos iv, 6–11). **Was like to be broken**—Literally, *was thought to be broken.* Its destruction was almost in sight. G. A. Smith, "threatened to break up." A storm of this character would strike terror everywhere. The sailors sought relief (1) by appealing to their gods, and (2) by casting overboard everything that could be spared. **Every man unto his god**—There were probably few Jewish sailors or passengers. The crew was made up, undoubtedly, very largely of Phœnicians, and may have included representatives of other nations, who were worshipers of different deities; besides, the ship may have carried passengers from various cities and peoples. However reckless at other times, the danger drove them to their knees. Compare Shakespeare (*The Tempest*, i, 1), "All lost! to prayers, to prayers! all lost!" **Wares**—Whether this means the furniture (Acts xxvii, 19), or the cargo (Acts xxvii, 38), or both, is not known; nor is the nature of the cargo indicated. Some have supposed that it was a corn ship, as in the case of Paul. **To lighten it of them**—Better, R. V., "to lighten it unto them"; literally, *from upon them.* Not, to lighten the

of them. But Jonah was gone down [i]into the sides of the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep. 6 So the shipmaster came to him, and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, [k]call upon thy God, [l]if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not. 7 And they

[i] 1 Sam. 24. 3.—[k] Psa. 107. 28.

[l] Joel 2. 14.

ship, but their distress; to remove it as if it were a burden (Exod. xviii, 22).

Meanwhile Jonah seems to be unaware of the danger. **Was gone down**—Perhaps before the storm broke out, so that he was unconscious of it. **Into the sides**—R. V., "innermost parts" (as in Amos vi, 10); here perhaps the lowest part of the ship. **Fast asleep**—Some have explained this as a sign of a troubled conscience—that Jonah had thrown himself down to forget, and thus to escape the danger and the hand of God; or, that, utterly exhausted by the mental struggle and the realization of the danger, he had fallen asleep: "Troubled with the gnawings of conscience and overpowered with mourning, he had sought comfort in sleep and fallen into a deep sleep." On the other hand, Jerome regards it as an indication of a calm mind; the others, who know not Jehovah, are seriously troubled, but the prophet feels so secure even in the midst of the storm that he calmly sleeps on. That the sleep is an indication of calmness of mind is probably true; but the feeling of security was due not to confidence in Jehovah, but rather to the belief that he had succeeded in escaping "the presence of Jehovah." The sleep of Jonah has been frequently compared with that of Jesus in a severe storm (Mark iv, 35–41); but what a difference in the frame of mind that made possible the sleep! Jesus was calm in the assurance that God's protecting care was over him; Jonah, because he thought he was outside the reach of Jehovah.

6. The very fact that Jonah remained sound asleep and did not join the others in their frantic efforts to relieve the situation would direct attention to him and arouse suspicion. **Shipmaster**—Literally, *the chief of the handlers of the ropes* (Ezek. xxvii, 8, 27–29); the captain. **What meanest thou, O sleeper?**—How can any man sleep, with doom so imminent? **Call upon thy God**—The gods implored by the others had failed to still the tempest; perhaps the God of Jonah can bring relief. **If so be**—Perhaps. **God**—Literally, *the God.* "It is not clear that the speaker identified Jonah's God with *the* God . . . Perhaps all that the shipmaster meant was, that, if they all called, each man upon his god, the fruit of their piety might perhaps be that God, whatever god was *the* God, would spare their lives." Only later events led the men to identify Jonah's God, Jehovah, with *the* God. **Will think upon us**—Literally, *will bethink himself for us*—that is, for our benefit. An anthropomorphism (see on *repent*, Joel ii, 13). The above is a possible translation of the verb, but Cheyne proposes to substitute a slightly different verb, used, in the same sense, in Psa. xl, 17. Some translate the present verb "will brighten," or "shine upon us"—that is, will show himself favorable to us. The thought remains the same.

Whether Jonah arose and followed the advice of the captain is not stated; probably he did, but in vain, for the storm continued. 7. There could no longer be any doubt that a desperate sinner was on board, on whose account the calamity had fallen (see concluding remarks on Amos iv, 6–11; compare Josh. vii, 1ff.; 1 Sam. xiv, 36–46). If he could be discovered and removed from their midst the divine wrath might cease; hence they proceed to discover the guilty. **Cast lots**—Only a deity could reveal the culprit; therefore appeal was made to the deity by the casting of the lots, which was an ancient method of determining the will of a god (Ezek. xxi,

said every one to his fellow, Come, and let us [m]cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil *is* upon us. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah. 8 Then said they unto him, [n]Tell us, we pray thee, for whose cause this evil *is* upon us; What *is* thine occupation? and whence comest thou? what *is* thy country? and of what people *art* thou? 9 And he said unto them, I *am* an Hebrew; and I fear [4]the LORD, the God of heaven, [o]which hath made the sea and the dry *land*. 10 Then were the men [5]exceedingly afraid, and said unto him, Why hast thou done this? For the men knew that he fled from the presence of

[m] Josh. 7. 14, 16; 1 Sam. 10. 20, 21; 14. 41, 42; Prov. 16. 33; Acts 1. 26.—[n] Josh. 7. 19; 1 Sam. 14. 43.

[4] Or, *JEHOVAH*.—[o] Psa. 146. 6; Acts 17. 24.—[5] Heb. *with great fear*.

21). It is used even in the New Testament (Acts i, 26), but not again after Pentecost. **For whose cause**—On whose account. **The lot fell upon Jonah**—Jerome's comment on these words is worthy of quotation: "The fugitive is taken by lot, not from any virtue in lots themselves, least of all the lots of the heathen, but by the will of Him who governs uncertain lots" (Josh. vii, 18; 1 Sam. xiv, 42).

8. The case seemed clear against Jonah. The sailors, however, do not condemn him unheard; they give him an opportunity to clear himself, if possible. **For whose cause this evil is upon us**—As in verse 7. After the decision by lot there could remain no question in the minds of the sailors as to the cause of the calamity. The only ground for putting the question to Jonah could be a desire to secure a confession from him. It should be noted, however, that LXX., B and several Hebrew manuscripts omit this question, and it may not be original.

The four questions which follow, and which are flung at the prophet in rapid succession, deal with his occupation, his home, and his nationality. **Occupation**—His occupation might possibly be offensive to the god of the tempest. **Whence**—City or town. The prophet's home or people might be under a divine curse. The mystery could be cleared only by his answers. 9. Only the answer to the fourth question is stated; but verse 10 indicates that his reply was even more complete than they had requested; and it is quite possible that Jonah made a full confession. It seems that the rapid succession of startling events brought him to his senses, for throughout the rest of the chapter his bearing is pictured as dignified and manly; but it is a little too much to see in this change of attitude an evidence of *conversion* (compare especially chapter iv). **Hebrew**—The name used by the descendants of Abraham when speaking of themselves to foreigners (Gen. xl, 15; Exod. ii, 7; iii, 18, etc.). **I fear Jehovah**—Not, I am afraid of, but, I am a worshiper of. He thus boldly acknowledges himself to be a servant of Jehovah; but there is no intention, as some have supposed, of claiming special piety or feigning innocence. **God of heaven**—A title of Jehovah indicating his supreme majesty; found chiefly in postexilic writings (Ezra i, 2; Neh. i, 4; Dan. ii, 18, etc.). **Made the sea and the dry land**—He is the creator. What folly to attempt to escape from the presence of such a God (i, 3).

10. The words of Jonah recorded in verse 9 would be sufficient to create fear and restlessness; but if the closing words of verse 10 are original, Jonah made known his attempt to flee from this God of heaven and earth. No wonder they were "sore afraid"; for the attempt to escape from the supreme God is the climax of crime and the height of folly. **Why hast thou done this?**—R. V., "What is this that thou hast done?" Not a question of inquiry, but an exclamation of astonishment and indignation at his crime and folly. **The men knew that he fled**—While the presence of Jonah in the boat and the storm viewed in the light of the confession in verse 9 might have been sufficient to lead the

the LORD, because he had told them.

11 Then said they unto him, What shall we do unto thee, that the sea [c]may be calm unto us? for the sea [7] [8]wrought, and was tempestuous. **12** And he said unto them, [p]Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest *is* upon you. **13** Nevertheless the men [9]rowed hard to bring *it* to the land; [q]but they could not: for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous against them. **14** Wherefore they cried unto the LORD, and said, We beseech thee, O LORD, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and [r]lay not upon us innocent blood: for thou, O LORD, [s]hast done as it pleased thee. **15** So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea: [t]and the sea [10]ceased from her raging.

[6] Heb. *may be silent from us.*—[7] Or, *grew more and more tempestuous.*—[8] Heb. *went.*—[p] John 11. 50.

[9] Heb. *digged.*—[q] Prov. 21. 30.—[r] Deut. 21. 8.—[s] Psa. 115. 3.—[t] Psa. 89. 9; Luke 8. 24.—[10] Heb. *stood.*

sailors to suppose that they had before them a fugitive from the presence of Jehovah, there seems insufficient reason for questioning the originality of the closing words of verse 10, which state that the prophet informed the men of his attempt. 11. **What shall we do**—Though terror struck, the sailors are ready to deal with Jonah, who alone was responsible for their plight, in all fairness. Something must be done, but they are willing to receive any suggestion as to the proper course to pursue. **Unto us**—Literally, *from upon us*, that is, so that it may cease from rushing upon us like an enemy (verse 5). **The sea wrought, and was tempestuous**—R. V., "the sea grew more and more tempestuous"; literally, *was* (*is*) *going on and was* (*is*) *being tempestuous.* A peculiar Hebrew idiom, which is rightly reproduced in R. V. (compare Gen. viii, 3; 1 Sam. ii, 26; 2 Sam. iii, 1). The words may be interpreted as the utterance of the sailors, giving the reason for their anxious appeal to him; it is high time that something should be done, since the raging of the sea is constantly increasing.

12. **Cast me forth**—Jonah meets them frankly. He has learned that his attempt to flee from the presence of Jehovah is a failure; that he alone is responsible for the divine wrath which has caused the tempest; and that the only way to remove the danger is to get rid of him. Hence he is willing to suffer the consequences of his rashness and disobedience. 13. **The men rowed hard**—Literally, *broke through.* They tried to break through the waves (Amos ix, 2). The manly attitude of Jonah may have aroused the sympathy of the sailors; they did their best to save him, but in vain. The tempest only increased in fury. 14. When all efforts failed they finally decided to cast Jonah overboard, but first they prayed to Jonah's God that he would not hold them guilty of murder. **They cried unto Jehovah**—Jonah, as the worshiper of Jehovah, was under the latter's protection. He might avenge any injury done to his prophet. Against this divine vengeance they sought to protect themselves. **For this man's life**—Which is about to be destroyed (Deut. xix, 21; 2 Sam. xiv, 7). **Lay not upon us innocent blood**—These words do not imply that they considered Jonah innocent, and they do not mean that they prayed Jehovah to interfere so that they might not be compelled to destroy the life of an innocent man. The casting of the lot had settled the question of Jonah's guilt; but they, with other ancients, believed that a deity might act arbitrarily, and were afraid that, after they had thrown Jonah overboard, Jehovah might impute his death upon them as blood-guiltiness (Deut. xxi, 8), as if he were an innocent man, and thus demand their death in turn. **Thou . . . hast done as it pleased thee**—In sending the storm and in overruling the lot. In casting Jonah overboard they were

16 Then the men [u]feared the LORD exceedingly, and [11]offered a sacrifice unto the LORD, and made vows.

17 Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And [x]Jonah was in the [12]belly of the fish three days and three nights.

[u] Mark 4. 41; Acts 5. 11.—[11] Heb. *sacrificed a sacrifice unto the LORD, and vowed vows.*—[x] Matt. 12. 40; 16 4; Luke 11. 30.—[12] Heb. *bowels.*

only carrying out the divine pleasure as revealed in the acts of the divine providence. 15, 16. The prayer ended, they cast Jonah out, and immediately the sea grew calm. **The men feared Jehovah exceedingly**—The sudden cessation of the tempest was unfailing evidence that the God of Jonah was *the* God (Mark iv, 41). In his presence they were utterly helpless, and they were still more afraid (verse 10). **Offered a sacrifice**—Immediately. Partly to express their gratitude and partly to receive the good will and favor of Jehovah. **Made vows**—The things which they might consider necessary for suitable sacrifices to this powerful God may have been scanty on the ship, therefore, they promise that on the safe completion of the voyage they will bring additional and richer gifts. Nothing more is heard of the sailors.

JONAH'S WONDERFUL DELIVERANCE, i, 17–ii, 10 (in Hebrew, ii, 1–11).

The deliverance of Jonah is recorded in i, 17, and ii, 10. Jehovah prepared a great fish, which swallowed Jonah. After he had been in the fish's belly for three days and three nights he was, at the divine command, cast upon the dry land. Chapter ii, 1–9, contains a poem, a prayer which Jonah is said to have offered from the belly of the fish. If so, one would expect it to be a petition; in reality it is a hymn of praise and thanksgiving for the deliverance already wrought. This peculiarity has been explained either by assuming that it was spoken by Jonah after he was vomited out by the fish, and that its proper place is after ii, 10; or that it is a song of thanksgiving uttered in the fish's belly when the prophet discovered that he was preserved alive. This preservation he regarded as a pledge of final deliverance, and for it he praised God in anticipation (see Introduction, p. 337).

Prepared—The verb does not mean "created," as if Jehovah had created the fish for this special purpose, but "ordain" or "appoint." Jehovah appointed some great fish, already in existence, to swallow Jonah. "By God's immediate direction it was so arranged that the very moment when Jonah was thrown into the waves the 'great fish' was on the spot to receive him." **Great fish**—This is the literal translation. Nothing is said of the species of the fish; but for a long time the popular idea has been that it was a whale. Against this identification it has been urged that the whale is not found in the Mediterranean, and that he has such a small gullet that he could not swallow a man. However, of the existence of whales in the Mediterranean there can be no doubt, and, while the gullet of the common whale is not large enough to let a man pass through whole, there are whales that would not have this difficulty; and of these the great *spermaceti* whale is said to wander sometimes into the Mediterranean. Most commentators, however, who interpret the narrative literally, identify the "great fish" with the shark. The latter is not uncommon in the Mediterranean. G. E. Post says that he saw one at Beirut twenty feet long; and this fish would have no difficulty in swallowing a man. To illustrate the capacity of the shark it has become customary to call attention to the following incident: "In 1758 in stormy weather a sailor fell overboard from a frigate in the Mediterranean. A shark was close by, which, as he was swimming and crying for help, took him in his wide throat, so that he forthwith disap-

CHAPTER II.

THEN Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God out of the fish's belly. 2 And said, I [a]cried [1]by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, [b]and he heard me; out of the belly of [2]hell cried I, *and* thou heardest my voice. 3 [c]For thou hadst cast

[a] Psa. 120. 1; 130. 1; 142. 1; Lam. 3. 55 56.——[1] Or, *out of mine affliction.*

[b] Psa. 65. 2.——[2] Or, *the grave*, Isa. 14. 9.——[c] Psa. 88. 6.

peared. Other sailors had leaped into the sloop to help their comrade, while yet swimming; the captain had a gun which stood on the deck discharged at the fish, which struck it so that it cast out the sailor which it had in its throat, who was then taken up, alive and little injured, by the sloop which had now come up." From this and similar incidents it would seem that there are fish that might swallow a man whole; though it would be remarkable for him to remain alive and uninjured.

Three days and three nights—Whether this is interpreted as meaning three full days and full nights, or simply "a space of time reaching backward and forward beyond twenty four hours" (Matt. xii, 40), is of little consequence; according to all *natural laws* it would be impossible for any man to remain alive for any considerable length of time in the belly of a fish (see Luther's words quoted on p. 325). Only by direct, divine, miraculous interference could Jonah be kept alive. At the end of this period the fish, at the divine command, vomited out Jonah. **Dry land**—Where, is not stated. The author probably intended it to be understood that the fish carried Jonah back to the place from which he had embarked. The traditional site of the ejection of the prophet is near Sidon.

CHAPTER II.

THE PRAYER OF JONAH, 1–9.

Verse 1 is the introduction, indicating the circumstances under which the prayer was offered. The prayer itself opens with an acknowledgment that Jehovah heard the petition offered in distress and wrought the petitioner's deliverance (2). After repeated figurative descriptions of the danger and distress into which he had been plunged, he glorifies Jehovah for the salvation wrought (3–6). The supplicant closes with the assurance that he will not forget the divine mercy but will forever praise Jehovah, the author of all deliverance (7–9). The prayer consists for the most part of reminiscences from the Psalms (see Introduction, p. 335).

1. **Prayed**—The verb is used here in the wider sense of any turning of the heart toward God, whether in supplication or praise (1 Sam. ii, 1). At what period of his imprisonment Jonah is thought to have offered the prayer is not stated; ii, 10, would seem to imply, however, that it was toward the close. **His God**—Before (i, 3), he tried to escape from Jehovah's presence; now, in danger of his life, he is driven to appeal to him as *his* God.

2. **I cried . . . he heard**—R. V., "I called . . . he answered." The tenses indicate that both the petition and the reply are experiences of the past (verse 6). **By reason of mine affliction**—Better, R. V. margin, "out of mine affliction"; which is further described in 3ff. **Belly of hell**—R. V., "Sheol." On the latter see on Hos. xiii, 14. It is frequently pictured as a ravenous beast, with a greedy appetite (Prov. xxx, 16; Hab. ii, 5), with a wide-open mouth (Isa. v, 14). Here a *belly* is given to it, which may have been suggested by the belly of the fish. As in Psa. xviii, 5; xxx, 3, Sheol is a poetic picture for the dangers of death, from which there seems no escape. With 2a compare Psa. cxx, 1, or xviii, 6; with 2b compare Psa. xviii, 5.

Verse 3 describes the affliction from which came deliverance. **For thou hadst cast**—Literally, *And thou didst*

me into the deep, in the [3]midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: [d]all thy billows and thy waves passed over me. 4 [e]Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again [f]toward thy holy temple. 5 The [g]waters compassed me about, *even* to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. 6 I went down to the [4]bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars *was* about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life [h]from [5]corrup-

[3] Heb. *heart.*—[d] Psa. 42.7.—[e] Psa. 31. 22.—[f] 1 Kings 8. 38.—[g] Psa. 69. 1; Lam. 3. 54.—[4] Heb. *cuttings off*—[h] Psa. 16. 10.—[5] Or, *the pit.*

cast. This can hardly be interpreted as giving the reason for the thanksgiving. Better, *Yea, thou didst cast.* This is a perfectly possible translation. It certainly is not necessary to suppose that a clause has dropped out. In the case of Jonah, Jehovah was the real author of the calamity (i, 14; compare also i, 4, and the references there). **Deep, . . . midst of the seas; . . . floods . . . billows . . . waves**—Taken in connection with the experiences of Jonah these terms might all be interpreted literally. On the other hand, in the psalm literature, these or similar terms are used figuratively of the depths of trouble and distress. The "midst (R. V., "heart") of the seas" (for plural compare G.-K., 124a), which defines "deep," is the bottom of the sea (Exod. xv, 5; Mic. vii, 19). **Floods**—Literally, *river;* the currents of the sea (Psa. xxiv, 2). **Thy**—Jehovah made them (i, 9) and controls them (Psa. xviii, 4, 5). For the last clause compare especially Psa. xlii, 7.

4. Two emotions struggled within the supplicant At first despair seized him. **Cast out**—He thought Jehovah had no further interest in him or care for him (Psa. xxxi, 22). But the despondency was only temporary. He determined, even in his apparently hopeless condition, to appeal to Jehovah (verse 7). **Look again toward thy holy temple**—The position of prayer (1 Kings viii, 38; Psa. v, 7). On *holy* see on Joel ii, 1; Zech. xiv, 20. The temple in Jerusalem is the earthly dwelling place of Jehovah. The words do not necessarily express the expectation that the supplicant will be delivered and that after the deliverance he will "look toward the temple." Even now, from the midst of the danger, in spite of the apparent hopelessness of the situation, he will again, as in times past, lift up his heart in prayer. There is no reason for changing 4b so as to read, "How can I again look toward thy holy temple?"

Verse 5 continues the description of the deadly peril. **Even to the soul**—The most vital part; it seems all over with him (Psa. xviii, 4, 5; lxix, 1; for the second line compare Psa. lxix, 2). **The weeds were wrapped about my head**—The sea grass grows at the bottom. Another indication, therefore, of the depth of trouble to which the petitioner has sunk (verse 3). Wellhausen calls attention to the fact that sea grass does not grow in the belly of a fish. 6. **The bottoms of the mountains**—Literally, *the cuttings off;* the extreme ends. The mountains are thought of as extending their roots to the bottom of the sea (Psa. xviii, 5). **The earth with her bars was about me**—Literally, *as to the earth, her bars were behind me.* He thinks himself cast out from the earth; the earth has put down the bars so as to make return to the dry land impossible forever. The comparison is with a city whose gates are barred so that no one can enter. Marti reads 6a, "I went down to the nether parts of the earth, to the people of old time"; that is, the people who died in ancient times (Ezek. xxvi, 20; xxxii, 18, 24); in other words, to Sheol.

The depth of affliction and the deadly character of the peril make the deliverance the more wonderful. To this deliverance the singer now turns. **Yet hast thou brought up my life**—Thou hast brought me up alive, in

tion, O LORD my God. 7 When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD: [i]and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple. 8 They that observe [k]lying vanities forsake their own mercy. 9 But I will [l]sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay *that* that I have vowed. [m]Salvation *is* of the LORD.

10 And the LORD spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry *land*.

CHAPTER III.

AND the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time, saying, 2 Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee. 3 So

[i] Psa. 18. 6.—[k] 2 Kings 17. 15; Psa. 31. 6; Jer. 10. 8; 16. 19.—[l] Psa. 50. 14, 23; 116. 17, 18; Hos. 14. 2; Heb. 13. 15.—[m] Psa. 3. 8.

spite of the apparent hopelessness. **From corruption**—R. V., "from the pit." The former is the meaning given to the word by the ancient versions, but R. V. is to be preferred. The word is practically synonymous with *Sheol* (verse 2; Psa. xxx, 3, 9). **Jehovah my God**—See on verse 1.

Verse 7 goes back to verse 4, calling attention once more to the conflicting emotions while in the midst of danger. **My soul fainted**—Literally, *was overwhelmed;* became exhausted (Psa. cxlii, 3; cxliii, 4). **I remembered**—When about ready to give up the struggle he thought of Jehovah, and decided to appeal to him (4), and his prayer was heard (Psa. xviii, 6; v, 7).

8, 9. The wonderful deliverance has taught the singer a lesson. Whatever others may do, he will remain loyal to Jehovah, the God of his deliverance. The main thought is expressed in verse 9; verse 8 serves to emphasize the determination of the speaker. **They that observe** ["regard"] **lying vanities**—All who pay homage to idols and put their trust in them (Deut. xxxii, 21; Psa. xxxi, 6; compare Hos. x, 10). The idols are called "lying vanities" because they are ever disappointing those putting their trust in them. **Forsake their own mercy**—Forsake Him who is their mercy, or who alone can show them mercy. The same word is translated in Psa. cxliv, 2, "loving-kindness" (see on Hos. ii, 19). From Jehovah and from manifestations of his mercy they foolishly cut themselves off. Not so the psalmist; he will seek to retain the divine favor by meeting all his obligations to Jehovah. This determination is based upon his past experience of the power and mercy of his God. Marti thinks that before verse 9 two lines have fallen out, and he supplies, "But I trust in thee, Jehovah, my saviour" (Psa. xxxi, 6). **Sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving**—He will offer his sacrifices with expressions of praise and thanksgiving (Psa. xlii, 4). **Pay that that I have vowed**—While in distress (Psa. l, 14, 23). Nothing is said in the rest of the prayer or in the narrative of a vow made by Jonah (compare the vow of the sailors, i, 16). **Salvation is of Jehovah**—"The sum and substance of the whole hymn" (Psa. iii, 8). Jehovah alone can deliver; therefore in him he will trust forever. On verse 10 see after comments on i, 17.

CHAPTER III.

JONAH'S PREACHING AND NINEVEH'S REPENTANCE, 1–10.

Jehovah repeats the command to Jonah, to preach to Nineveh (1, 2). This time Jonah obeys and delivers the message, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown" (3, 4). The preaching results in the conversion of king and people, who give every evidence of heartfelt repentance (5–9); whereupon Jehovah withholds the judgment (10).

1–4. *The preaching of Jonah.* Chapter iii, 1, is almost identical with i, 1, the only difference being the addition of "the second time" and the omission of "the son of Amittai"; iii, 2a, is

Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an [1]exceeding great city of three days' journey. 4 And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey,

[1] Heb. *of God;* so Gen. 30. 8; Psa. 36. 6; 80. 10.

identical with i, 2a; but 2b is different. **Preach**—The same word as in i, 2, "cry"; "preaching," derived from the same root, occurs only here in the Old Testament. The message is to be determined by Jehovah.

Jonah has learned a lesson; and, though still rebellious in heart (iv, 2), he proceeds immediately to carry out the divine commission. The narrative of Jonah's preaching is interrupted by a brief description of Nineveh's greatness (verse 3; compare iv, 11). **Was**—Definitely expressed in Hebrew; may indicate that Nineveh was no longer a "great city," when the description was written (see p. 335). **An exceeding great city**—Literally, *a city great unto God,* that is, great even in the estimation of God (compare Gen. x, 9); Kautzsch renders in German "unmenschlich gross" (superhumanly great). Probably an anticipation of iv, 11, where the size of the city and the number of the inhabitants are given as a reason for God's desire to save it. **Three days' journey**—It seems more natural to interpret this of the diameter than of the circumference. True, some of the classical writers make it appear that the diameter was only one day's journey, while the circumference was approximately three days' journey. But, as Marti suggests, there is no reason why Herodotus and the Book of Jonah should agree on this point; besides, if we should interpret "three days' journey" of the circumference, and make the diameter only one day's journey, Jonah must have passed through the entire city before delivering his message, while verse 4 declares that he "*began* to enter into the city a day's journey," which expression certainly presupposes that there was considerable distance to traverse before he could reach the other end (see further on verse 4). It seems best, therefore, to interpret "three days" of the diameter. The extent of the city walls is given by C. H. W. Johns as follows: "The city on the river side of the Tigris extended about two and one half miles; its north wall measured about seven thousand feet, the eastern wall was nearly three miles long, and the southern about one thousand feet. . . . The actual extent of Nineveh proper is about eighteen hundred acres. . . . Outside this citadel city lay the 'outskirts.' . . . Farther afield, and apparently close to Khorsabad, lay *Rêbit Ninûa.*" The latter is perhaps the *Rehoboth-Ir* of Gen. x, 11. In order to get a city three days in diameter or three days long, it is necessary to include all the cities mentioned in Gen. x, 11, 12, Rehoboth-Ir, Calah, and Resen, which, though not all identified, must have been in the immediate neighborhood of Nineveh proper. Koenig insists that even this combination would fail to give the required size (see p. 317). **Began to enter into the city a day's journey**—A day's journey is still called a beginning, because two more were beyond. The natural interpretation seems to be that he journeyed one day; then, having found a suitable place, he delivered his message. Others give a different interpretation. "He began to perambulate the city, going hither and thither, as far as was possible in the first day." While thus going from street to street, and market place to market place, he is thought to have delivered his message again and again. While the former is the more natural interpretation of the Hebrew, the latter has this advantage, that, with it, verse 4 throws no light on the meaning of "three days' journey" in verse 3. It would be pos-

and [a]he cried, and said, Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown.

5 So the people of Nineveh [b]believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. 6 For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered *him* with sackcloth, [c]and sat in ashes. 7 [d]And he caused *it* to be proclaimed and [2]published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his [3]nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water: 8 But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry

[a] See Deut. 18. 22.—[b] Matt. 12. 41; Luke 11. 32.—[c] Job 2. 8.

[d] 2 Chron. 20. 3; Joel 2. 15.—[2] Heb. *said*.—[3] Heb. *great men*.

sible, then, to understand the extent indicated of the circumference, which would reduce the size of the city, and thus remove a geographical difficulty.

Yet forty days . . . —A very simple message, but one destined to create consternation. Apparently the words of Jonah contained an unconditional announcement of judgment; but later developments showed that it was conditional, that the execution depended upon the people's attitude toward the prophetic message.

Several modern commentators insert chapter iv, 5, after iii, 4. Jonah, after having delivered his message, is thought to have left the city to await further developments. Chapter iv, 5, would make a good continuation of iii, 4, but the transposition is not necessary. Marti's statement, "Undoubtedly Jonah did not await the coming of the fortieth day in the city, but left the same previously," is not conclusive.

5–9. *The effect of the preaching.* The effects were immediate. The Ninevites believed God and humbled themselves before him in sincere repentance. **Believed God**—Or, *believed in God* (Gen. xv, 6): They regarded him as the supreme God, to whom they owed allegiance. This recognition made them conscious of their past transgressions, and immediately they set about to secure divine forgiveness. How Jonah, a Hebrew, made himself understood in Nineveh is not stated; some refer, in explanation, to Isa. xxxvi, 11, as if he had used the Aramaic language, but the passage does not prove that in Jonah's days the common people, either among the Hebrews or among the Assyrians, spoke or understood that language. **Proclaimed a fast, . . . put on sackcloth**—See on Joel i, 8, 13, 14. **Greatest . . . least**—In rank as well as in age; all without exception.

For word came—This translation seems to imply that the acts of mourning mentioned in verse 5 were instituted at the royal command, which does not seem to be the thought of the author. The Hebrew is simply, "And the word came"; R. V., "And the tidings reached"; which marks a new step in the proceedings. When the report of Jonah's preaching and of its effect reaches the king he also immediately humbles himself before Jehovah. **King of Nineveh**—For the more common "king of Assyria"; see Introduction, p. 335. **Arose from his throne**—In order to descend from it. His acts are recorded in detail, so as to portray more forcibly the humility and sincerity of the king's repentance. **His robe**—The splendid garment of royalty. What a contrast between it and the garment of mourning! **Sackcloth**—See references on verse 5 (compare Jer. vi, 26; Ezek. xxvii, 30, 31). **Sat in ashes**—Another sign of deepest mourning (Job ii, 8). A. B. Davidson, commenting on the latter passage, says, "By the 'ashes' is probably meant the *Mazbalah*, the place outside the Arabic towns where the *zibl*, that is, dung and other rubbish of the place, is thrown."

In addition to this personal renunciation the king proclaimed, by royal decree, a day of fasting and sup-

mightily unto God: yea, [e]let them turn every one from his evil way, and from [f]the violence that *is* in their hands. 9 [g]Who can tell *if* God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?

10 [h]And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did *it* not.

[e] Isa. 58. 6.—[f] Isa. 59. 6.—[g] 2 Sam 12. 22; Joel 2. 14.—[h] Jer. 18. 8; Amos 7. 3, 6.

plication, and exhorted all to bring forth "fruits worthy of repentance," in the hope that God may yet be merciful. 7a, the introduction to the decree itself, may be rendered more accurately, "And he made proclamation and published through Nineveh. By the decree of the king and his nobles, thus: . . . ." The first clause contains the words of the narrator; the second those of the heralds by whom the proclamation was made, indicating the authority for the command about to be given. **Decree**—The Hebrew word occurs only here in this sense; it is found quite frequently in the Aramaic portions of Ezra and Daniel; evidently it was a technical term for royal edicts, at least for those of Babylonian and Persian kings. **Nobles**—The ministers associated with the king in the government.

Man and beast are to join in the fast. **Beast**—The domestic animals; defined more closely in "herd nor flock," that is, cattle and sheep. They are not to taste anything; the beasts are not to be driven to pasture, nor are they to drink water. Both man and beast are to be clothed in sackcloth and "cry mightily" unto God in penitent supplication. **God**—The proclamation does not use the name *Jehovah*. **Turn**—The repentance is to be real; a godly sorrow that impels men to turn from their evil ways. Even the Assyrian idolater is represented as realizing the essential requirements of the God of the Hebrews (Mic. vi, 8; compare Joel ii, 13). R. V. presents a more accurate rendering of 8a, "But let them be covered with sackcloth, both man and beast, and let them cry mightily." Some modern commentators consider "both man and beast" in this passage a later interpolation. If this view is correct, verse 8 speaks of men only, while verse 7 joins the beasts with the men. With reference to the participation of animals in the mourning G. A. Smith says, "The beasts are made to share in its observance, as in the Orient they always shared and still share in funeral pomp and trappings." Herodotus (ix, 24) records that the Persians, after the fall of their commander, allowed horses and beasts of burden to participate in the mourning.

Verse 9 is the concluding portion of the royal edict. The king expresses the hope that the evidences of grief and repentance may move God to stay the judgment. **Who can tell**—Perhaps. He does not want to presume too much. **Turn and repent**—The same words as in Joel ii, 14 (see on Joel ii, 13). **His fierce anger**—The holiness of God manifests itself in hatred for everything that is impure. The *fierceness* of the divine wrath is due to the greatness of the wickedness of the Ninevites (i, 2), which the king seems ready to acknowledge.

10. When God beheld their sincere repentance he stayed the judgment (see on iii, 4, and Amos ix, 15). **God repented**—See on Joel ii, 13 (compare Amos vii, 3).

CHAPTER IV.

Jonah's Complaint and Rebuke, 1–11.

When Jonah found that his threat was not being fulfilled he became angry and prayed Jehovah to kill him, since life was no longer worth living (1–3). Jehovah remonstrated with him (4). The prophet left the city and, having prepared a booth, settled down to await developments

CHAPTER IV.

BUT it displeased Jonah exceedingly and he was very angry. 2 And he prayed unto the LORD, and said, I pray thee, O LORD, *was* not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I [a]fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou *art* a [b]gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil. 3 [c]Therefore now, O LORD, take I beseech thee, my life from me; for [d]*it is* better for me to die than to live.

4 Then said the LORD, [1]Doest thou well to be angry? 5 So Jonah went out of the city, and sat on the east side of the city, and there made him a booth, and sat under it in

[a] Chap. 1. 3.—[b] Exod. 34. 6; Psa. 86. 5; Joel 2. 13.

[c] 1 Kings 19. 4.—[d] Verse 8.—[1] Or, *Art thou greatly angry?*

(5). By an object lesson Jehovah taught Jonah the folly and sin of his displeasure over the salvation of Nineveh and showed that God was perfectly justified in averting the doom of the city.

1, 2. **Displeased Jonah exceedingly, . . . was very angry**—Since his message remained unfulfilled, he feared that his honor as a prophet was at stake; which would be of supreme moment to a selfish person. **He prayed**—Many commentators have considered the prayer an expression of pious devotion, but its contents make this impossible. Keil comes nearer the truth when he says, "He tried to quarrel with God by praying." **Was not this my saying**—Not openly, perhaps, but in his heart he suspected that Jehovah would save the Ninevites, if they repented. **Therefore**—Because of this suspicion. **I fled before**—R. V., "I hasted to flee." The Hebrew construction is peculiar (G.-K., 114n, note 3), and the exact meaning is doubtful. Either "I fled before," that is, when thou didst call me the first time; or "I was beforehand in fleeing," that is, I sought to avoid the commission because I knew the message would remain unfulfilled; or "I sought to prevent by fleeing," the very thing that has now happened. **Tarshish**—See on i, 3. **For I knew**—His conviction as to what God would do arose from his knowledge of the divine character. For the rest of the verse see on Joel ii, 13.

3, 4. **Therefore now**—Since he is discredited as a prophet (Deut. xviii, 21, 22), life is no longer worth living; yet he does not think of taking his own life; he asks Him who gave it to take it away. **It is better for me to die than to live**—Elijah also (1 Kings xix, 4) prayed God to take his life (compare Num. xi, 15), but his weariness of life was due to another cause. G. A. Smith points out the difference between the two prophets in these words: "Elijah was jealous *for* Jehovah, Jonah was jealous *of* him." The former failed in his attempt to convert the people to whom he was sent; the latter did succeed, but was disappointed when the Ninevites were converted; he grudged them the divine pardon. Jonah was too narrow; he "could not bear to see the love which, as he thought, was promised to Israel alone, and cherished by her, bestowed equally on her heathen oppressor." He would rather die than see this done. Jehovah does not condemn Jonah harshly for this unreasonable outbreak; he rather attempts to brings him to his senses. **Doest thou well to be angry?**—"It is the gentle question of suggested reproof, designed to still the tumult of passion and lead to consideration and reflection."

5. Jonah's reply is not given, but evidently he continued to sulk. He would have nothing more to do with the city; hence he withdrew and determined to watch further developments, hoping, perhaps, that his announcement of destruction would yet be fulfilled. **East side**—Probably on some elevation from which he might overlook the city. **Made him a booth**—He evidently intended to remain

the shadow, till he might see what would become of the city. 6 And the LORD God prepared a [2] [3]gourd and made *it* to come up over Jonah, that it might be a shadow over his head, to deliver him from his grief. So Jonah [4]was exceeding glad of the gourd. 7 But God prepared a worm when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd that it withered. 8 And it came to pass, when the sun did arise, that God prepared a [5]vehement east wind; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that

[2] Or, *palmerist.*—[3] Heb. *Kikajon.*—[4] Heb. *rejoiced with great joy.*—[5] Or, *silent.*

for some time. **Till he might see**—Von Orelli supposes that when Jonah left the city the forty days had not yet expired, and that the prophet determined to wait for the expiration of the fixed period to see whether judgment would be executed. It is more likely, however, that Jonah discovered the will of God to save the city from the nonfulfillment of the prophecy at the end of the forty days. Only then his anger was aroused; nevertheless he hoped in his heart that the judgment was not withdrawn, but only postponed.

In this hope he was again disappointed; instead he was taught another lesson of the divine mercy. 6. **Jehovah God**—As in Gen. ii, 4. Both names are used to indicate that *God*, mentioned as supreme so frequently in the book, and Jehovah, the God of Jonah, are identical. **Prepared**—See on i, 17 (compare verse 7). **Gourd**—This translation of the Hebrew word, which occurs only here (6–10), is based upon LXX. The plant meant is the *Palma Christi*, or castor-oil plant (*Ricinus communis*). It is described by Jerome as being very abundant in Palestine, growing especially in sandy places. The same author (so also Pliny) calls attention to its rapid growth: "In a very few days what you saw as nothing but a herb you now look upon as a small tree." Its broad leaves are admirably adapted to protect against the sun. **Made it to come up**—Or, *it came up*—over the booth erected by Jonah; thus it protected the prophet's head against the rays of the sun. **To deliver him from his grief**—R. V., "from his evil case." A. V. seems to have in mind the displeasure of Jonah (verse 1), as if the offered shade could remove the irritation and displeasure. But his trouble was so deep-seated that the "gourd" could hardly do away with it. It is better to think of the heat of the sun beating upon the prophet's head. This affliction (so the Hebrew might be rendered), which may have increased the bitterness of his spirit, the plant was to remove. Most commentators consider the words a later interpolation. **Jonah was exceeding glad**—When the sun burned him no longer. It is not unlikely that with the heat went some of his bitterness.

7. The joy was short-lived. At the divine command a worm came which gnawed the roots of the "gourd," so that it perished. **Smote**—As in verse 8, to indicate the suddenness of the effect. Concerning the suddenness with which the castor-oil plant perishes Dr. Pusey says: "On warm days when a small rain falls, black caterpillars are generated in great numbers on this plant, which in one night so suddenly and so often cut off its leaves that only their bare ribs remain; which I have often observed with much wonder, as if it were a copy of that destruction of old at Nineveh." 8. With the "gourd" dead, the hot rays of the sun could again beat mercilessly upon the head of Jonah. **Vehement** ["sultry"] **east wind**—See on Hos. xii, 1. When these east winds are blowing the temperature rises very rapidly (G. A. Smith, *Historical Geography*, p. 67). The exact meaning of the word translated "vehement" or "sultry" is not known; but it is clear that the author intends to describe the wind as extraordinarily intense and disagreeable. Jonah soon became aware of the change. **He fainted**—Not necessarily, "he became

he fainted, and wished in himself to die, and said, [c]*It is* better for me to die than to live. **9** And God said to Jonah, [6]Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd? And he said, [7]I do well to be angry, *even* unto death. **10** Then said the LORD, Thou hast [8]had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not labored,

[c] Verse 3.—[6] Or, *Art thou greatly angry?*—[7] Or, *I am greatly angry.*—[8] Or, *spared.*

neither madest it grow; which [9]came up in a night, and perished in a night: **11** And should not I spare Nineveh, [f]that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons [g]that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and *also* much [h]cattle?

[9] Heb. *was the son of the night.*—[f] Chaps. 1. 2; 3. 2, 3.—[g] Deut. 1. 39.—[h] Psa. 36. 6; 145. 9.

unconscious," for he retained his senses sufficiently to wish for death; but, "he became completely exhausted" (Amos viii, 13). The old despondency returned, increased by the intense heat, and once more he prayed for death (verse 3).

9. God again deals very patiently with Jonah. He addresses him as in verse 4: "Doest thou well to be angry?" To which the prophet replies that he has every reason to be exceedingly angry, even so far as to desire death (Judg. xvi, 16; Matt. xxvi, 38). "The reply betrays a strange degree of willfulness; it shows the prophet in the attitude of a sullen child toward a loving father who is remonstrating with it."

10, 11. By his answer Jonah unwittingly offers Jehovah the opportunity to put him to shame. The prophet's attitude is absurd. He grieves over the destruction of an insignificant plant, in which he could have no vital interest; he had expended no labor upon it, nor had he caused its growth. How absurd to find fault with Jehovah for sparing Nineveh with its thousands of inhabitants! The two verses are full of marked contrasts. **Thou . . . I**—The pronouns are emphatic in Hebrew. **Gourd . . . Nineveh**—The former small and insignificant, the latter great and magnificent. The superiority of the latter's claim upon the divine mercy is further indicated: **That cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand**—Children of the tenderest age. They have as yet done no wrong; surely for their sake alone God would be justified in saving the city. The age limit to which this expression may be applied is variously estimated. Some think of three years, others of seven. The latter is favored by the fact that among Orientals seven years seems to be a favorite period by which to reckon childhood. Since, as commonly estimated, children under seven years of age constitute about one fifth of the entire population, the number given here would make the population of Nineveh about six hundred thousand. If the other estimate is accepted the number would be considerably increased. Nineveh proper cannot have contained such a large population; the city in its widest extent must be in the mind of the author (see on iii, 3). **Much cattle**—The animals also were guiltless. Besides, as Calvin remarks, "Oxen were certainly superior to shrubs. If Jonah was right in grieving over one withered shrub, it would surely be a harder and more cruel thing for so many innocent animals to perish." An additional reason for the divine mercy is at least implied. Jonah had expended no labor upon the plant, but how much effort and care had Jehovah bestowed upon the population of Nineveh! The fact that he sent a prophet to preach there (i, 2; iii, 2) was evidence of his interest in the city. Could he cast off the inhabitants when they turned to him?

What an insight these words give into the divine love and mercy, into the very heart of God! Jonah had condemned himself; "he was obliged to keep silent, defeated, as it were, by his own sentence."

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF MICAH.

The Person of the Prophet.

For information concerning the prophet Micah we are dependent almost exclusively upon the book bearing his name.

The name Micah is an abbreviated form of *Micaiah,* as the prophet is called in Jer. xxvi, 18, and means *Who is like Jehovah?* It contains, therefore, a confession of faith on the part of his parents. The family of Micah is unknown; his father is not named, which omission may be an indication of humble parentage.

In i, 1, Micah is called the "Morashtite" (R. V.), that is, an inhabitant of Moresheth, a village probably identical with "Moresheth-gath" in i, 14. His home town is named in order to distinguish him from an older prophet Micaiah (1 Kings xxii, 8ff.), and from the numerous other persons bearing the same name. The exact location of Moresheth is not yet determined. From i, 14, it would seem that it was near the city Gath (see on Amos vi, 2). Jerome refers to it as a small village near Eleutheropolis, about twenty-five miles southwest of Jerusalem, in the lowlands of Judah, near the Philistine border.

The only passage outside of the Book of Micah which mentions the prophet is Jer. xxvi, 18, 19. From that passage it would seem that Micah was, at least in part, responsible for the reformation under Hezekiah (2 Kings xviii, 4). Of the later life of Micah nothing is known. Some think that his activity continued into the dark reign of Manasseh (see pp. 359, 366).

The Time of the Prophet.

The date of Micah is to be discussed in a subsequent section; here it may be sufficient to state that, according to the heading in i, 1, and Jer. xxvi, 18, Micah prophesied in the days of Hezekiah. The political, social, moral, and religious conditions in Judah during the prophetic activity of Micah and of his older contemporary Isaiah were essentially the same as in Israel during the activity of Amos and Hosea (see pp. 18ff., 196ff.).

The Chronicler furnishes more complete information concerning the reign of Uzziah than the author of the Book of Kings. Combining the information furnished by the two, we learn that Uzziah, who died about 740 B. C., left to his son Jotham a kingdom enjoying a great measure of external prosperity. While Jeroboam II was extending the borders of Israel in the north (see p. 197), Uzziah was strengthening the kingdom of Judah in the south. He waged successful wars against the Philistines, and annexed part of their territory to his own. The Ammonites and Edomites were his vassals. He fortified Jerusalem and other cities, reorganized the army, and stocked his arsenals with ammunition of war.

In addition, he was not unmindful of the arts of peace. He developed very extensively the natural resources of the country. Being a lover of agriculture, he possessed many fields which were carefully tilled, watchtowers were erected for the protection of the king's cattle, and cisterns were dug for the collection and retention of the winter rains.

Uzziah was interested also in commerce. He rebuilt the port of Elath on the eastern arm of the Red Sea, by which foreign commerce might find its way into Judah. Sela, which had been captured by the king's father, Amaziah, commanded the trade route to southern Arabia.

All this brought to Judah a prosperity unequaled since the days of David and Solomon.

Uzziah was succeeded by his son Jotham, who continued

his father's policy. Jotham's independent reign—he had been coregent with his father for some years (2 Kings xv, 5)—was very brief. Toward its close Judah was threatened with an invasion by the allied forces of Damascus and Israel. The real crisis, however, did not come until he had been succeeded by his son Ahaz. At first the hostile armies were successful, and "the heart of the king trembled, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the forest tremble with the wind" (Isa. vii, 2). In despair Ahaz, against the protest of the prophet Isaiah, appealed for assistance to Tiglath-pileser III, of Assyria. The Assyrians advanced with great rapidity, and the two nations were punished severely. Judah was saved, but at the cost of her national independence; henceforth she became a vassal of the Assyrian king. During the remainder of his reign Ahaz seems to have remained loyal to Assyria; and during the early years of Hezekiah Judah kept out of difficulties by quietly paying tribute. The fall of Samaria in 722-721 made an impression that was not soon forgotten, and this impression became intensified when in 720 Sargon II defeated an Egyptian army near Raphia, on the borders of Egypt. Nevertheless, the states along the eastern coast of the Mediterranean bore impatiently the Assyrian yoke. As early as 711 Judah came near being involved in a revolt against Sargon. The death of the latter in 705 was the signal for uprisings throughout the entire empire. Merodach-baladan made himself again king of Babylon, and he succeeded in stirring up rebellion in the west, in which Judah joined. Sennacherib, the successor of Sargon, was compelled to spend several years in the east, in order to quell disturbances there; but in 702-701 he marched westward. Tyre, Sidon, and other states fell before him, Judah was overrun (2 Kings xviii, 13), Hezekiah was shut up in Jerusalem "like a bird in a cage," and the fall of the city was confidently expected. It was at that point that a divine Providence compelled Sennacherib to raise the siege of the city and return to Nineveh. Jerusalem was saved. Little more is known of the events during the reign of Heze-

kiah; even the year of his death is uncertain; he died sometime between 697 and 686.

Since certain prophecies in the book are thought by some to come from a period subsequent to Hezekiah, it may be well to consider briefly the political events under his successor Manasseh. According to 2 Kings xxi, 1, Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and he ruled fifty-five years. He seems to have been an opponent of the pure and spiritual Jehovah religion proclaimed by the eighth century prophets, and under him a great religious reaction swept over Judah. Concerning political events in his reign information is meager. He must have continued to pay tribute to the Assyrian kings, though 2 Chron. xxxiii, 11, states that he brought upon himself the anger of the king of Assyria and was carried in chains to Babylon. On the whole, the political life of Judah seems to have remained unchanged under Manasseh.

Socially and morally Judah presented a dark picture during the latter part of the eighth century and the first part of the seventh century B. C. Conditions are pictured most vividly in the prophecies of Isaiah and Micah, the Book of Kings dealing almost exclusively with political events. Of the two prophets, Isaiah views the situation from the standpoint of the patrician, the man of the city, Micah from that of the humble peasant from the country.

Foremost among the evils seen by Micah was the greed of the nobles manifesting itself in the attempts to build up large estates by forcibly ejecting the smaller property holders (ii, 1, 2). The judges were quite willing to assist their powerful friends in robbing the weak (iii, 11); the poor widows and orphans, who were without defenders, were cruelly robbed and plundered, and even sold into slavery (ii, 9). Creditors were heartless. The common people were oppressed by excessive taxation, that the magnificent palaces of the capital might be erected. The hopelessness of the situation is aptly described in vii, 5, 6, though these verses may not come from Micah himself: "Trust ye not in a neighbor; put ye not confidence

in a friend; keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom. For the son dishonoreth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house." Every man's hand seems to have been against his neighbor; even the most sacred relations of life were disregarded.

Like the other prophets, Micah saw that the nobles were chiefly to blame for the awful social and moral corruption. He likened them to cannibals, who tear the flesh of the people from their bones and eat it (iii, 3). Their greed and rapacity knew no limits; like highway robbers they pounced upon passers-by and stripped off their garments (ii, 8). Helpless women and children were their special prey (ii, 9). Under the guise of the law decisions were given in favor of the one offering the largest bribe (iii, 11). It may be interesting to read in this connection Isa. ii, 6—v, 24; ix, 8—x, 4.

Concerning religious conditions Micah says less than the other eighth century prophets, but the few remarks on the subject confirm the statements of his greater contemporary Isaiah. Religion had become a matter of form; ceremonial observances were thought to meet all religious requirements, and, as in Israel (see Amos, p. 198), the misapprehension was widespread that, so long as the external acts of worship were scrupulously performed, the people were entitled to the divine favor and protection (vi, 6, 7). This false notion seems to have found encouragement even among the religious leaders (iii, 11): "yet will they lean upon Jehovah, and say, Is not Jehovah among us? none evil can come upon us." In addition to this perverted Jehovah worship idolatry was quite common (compare Isa. ii, 8). Ahaz sought to please his Assyrian masters by introducing foreign elements in the temple worship (2 Kings xvi, 10ff.). Hezekiah, it is true, sought to bring about a religious reformation, but it was hardly as sweeping as 2 Kings xviii, 4, would, at first sight, seem to indicate; for in the days of Josiah, about a century later, there were still

found undisturbed high places reared by Solomon in or near Jerusalem (2 Kings xxiii, 13).

Under Manasseh religious conditions grew worse very rapidly. The idols torn down under Hezekiah were carefully restored; the Asherim were again set up; the enchanters and soothsayers exercised their old influence (2 Kings xxi, 6); even human sacrifice was offered (xxi, 6; compare xvi, 3). The worship of other deities was introduced into the temple itself; as was natural, those of Assyria received first place (xxi, 3, 5; xxiii, 11, 12). The popular worship of Judah at this time must, indeed, have been a strange combination of foreign and native cults.

Surely amid these conditions the task of a prophet was not an easy one.

The Date and Integrity of the Book.

That the prophet Micah labored during the period and under the conditions described in the preceding section can be easily shown; it is a more difficult task to fix the date of the entire Book of Micah. Chapter i, 1, written probably at a later time by the collector of the Minor Prophets into one book, is intended to be the title of the entire book. Apparently it ascribes all the prophecies in the book to Micah; and it assigns the prophet's activity to the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah; in round numbers, to the years between 740 and 700. That Micah prophesied in the days of Hezekiah is affirmed also in Jer. xxvi, 18, 19, where Mic. iii, 12, is quoted. The passage quoted is so closely connected with the preceding verses that verse 12 undoubtedly carries with it the entire third chapter; and certain striking similarities between it and chapters i, ii place it almost beyond doubt that all three chapters, in substance at least, proceeded from the same author. But internal evidence—for example, i, 6—makes it clear that i, 1ff., belong to the years immediately preceding or following the fall of Samaria. If that city fell in the sixth year of Hezekiah (2 Kings xviii, 10), internal evidence would seem

to support the testimony of the title and of Jer. xxvi, 18, 19, that Micah prophesied in the days of Hezekiah.*

Until near the middle of the nineteenth century the testimony of the title was accepted as final. Ewald was the first to question the authorship of chapters vi, vii, which he assigned to another prophet living during the dark reign of Manasseh. Since then a constantly increasing number of passages have been denied to Micah. Of more recent writers on the book Cheyne (*Encyclopædia Biblica,* article "Micah") declares: "One result is that in no part of chapters iv—vii can we venture to detect the hand of Micah. What the real Micah was must be learned from chapters i—iii, which are mostly genuine." In i—iii he is inclined to question i, 10-15; ii, 5, 10, 12, 13; iii, 2b, 3b. Nowack is somewhat more conservative. Chapters i—iii, with the possible exception of ii, 12, 13, he unhesitatingly ascribes to Micah. With regard to chapters iv, v he is more skeptical: "If there are any words of Micah at all in chapters iv, v, these can include no more than iv, 9, 10, 14; v, 9-13." The next section, vi, 1—vii, 6, he thinks "might, so far as their contents are concerned, proceed from Micah; . . . but not only the tenderness of feeling exhibited in vi, 1ff., but also the dramatic and exceedingly animated descriptions, make the composition of this section by Micah very improbable." Of vii, 7-20, he says emphatically that it "cannot possibly be attributed to Micah." Marti assigns to the prophet Micah only i, 5b, 6, 8, 9, 16; ii, 1-3, 4, 6-11; iii, 1, 2a, 3a, 4, 5a, 2b, 5b-8, 9, 10. These passages, he thinks, were arranged by Micah himself in one collection, which was the Micah book known in the days of Jeremiah.

* The chronology of Judah during the latter part of the eighth century B. C. is very obscure. If we follow 2 Kings xviii, 9, Hezekiah began to reign about 728; if we follow 2 Kings xviii, 13, his reign must have begun about 715. There is no intimation of a coregency, and apparently the two dates stand irreconcilable. The subject cannot be discussed here at length (see Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible*, article "Chronology"). There seems to be good reason for believing that Hezekiah came to the throne before the fall of Samaria; and, tentatively at least, the dates of the three kings named in the title may be given as follows: Jotham, 737-735; Ahaz, 735-728; Hezekiah, 728-697.

These three scholars represent the more extreme tendency in the criticism of the Book of Micah; and a close examination of the questioned passages as well as of the objections raised against them may show that it is not necessary to follow them all the way.

Leaving aside, then, a few minor passages in the first part of the book—which can be discussed, when necessary, more readily in the notes—an inquiry into the integrity of the Book of Micah must give attention to ii, 12, 13; iv; v; vi, 1—vii, 6; vii, 7-20. Only i, 2—ii, 11; iii, 1-12, are generally admitted to come from Micah, and to have been delivered near the fall of Samaria; and within these chapters, as already indicated, Cheyne and Marti question a number of verses.

Verses 12, 13 of chapter ii are questioned because "they are foreign to the line of thought expressed in chapters i, ii, for they presuppose the exile, and occupy themselves with the restoration of the people"; to which objection may be added the claim that linguistically they are closely connected with the exilic and postexilic literature. The linguistic argument is always precarious, and in this case it is without sufficient foundation. If the truth of the other objection, that ii, 12, 13, presuppose the exile as already present, could be established, the verses would have to be assigned to the exilic period; but, as will be shown in the notes on these verses, there is nothing in them that presupposes the exile as a present reality; in fact, there exists a rather close logical connection between 11 and 12. In view of this fact the objection to the originality of these verses cannot be considered conclusive (see below, comments on ii, 12, 13).

There are those, however, who do not deny the verses to Micah, but who consider them out of place in their present position. Steiner, for example, would place them after iv, 8; but, as already indicated, there is a real thought connection between 12, 13 and the preceding verses, so that a mere external abruptness of transition cannot be regarded as conclusively proving that the verses are out of place, especially since such

abrupt transitions are not infrequent in prophetic literature. Besides, though the transposition would remove in part abruptness, it would not do so entirely.

Chapters iv, v, with the possible exception of a few verses, have been denied to Micah chiefly on two grounds: 1. The strange and frequent juxtaposition of Messianic hopes and announcements of judgments is said to weaken the message of the prophet. Hence, it is said, Micah cannot be responsible for it. This objection is raised against all similar passages in other prophetic books (see Hosea, pp. 35f.; Amos, p. 215). When it is once admitted, however, that the prophets entertained a hope of the preservation of a remnant, the difficulty vanishes almost completely. The promises are made not to the entire people, but to this remnant. Since the doctrine of the remnant cannot be removed from the utterances of the other eighth century prophets, why may it not have formed a part of Micah's religious thinking? But if this doctrine can be found in Micah the presence of these ideal pictures of the future presents no difficulty; it would be more surprising not to find them. When it is further borne in mind, as is pointed out in the introductory remarks to chapters iv, v and in the notes on these chapters, that the two chapters are a collection of short oracles, all dealing with the same subject, the Messianic outlook, but not coming from the same period of the prophet's activity, and describing the Messianic age from different points of view, suggested by the ever-changing historical background of the various utterances, the objection will be found to lose all its force. 2. The second objection is closely related to the first. It is pointed out that mutually exclusive views present themselves in these chapters (compare iv, 6-8, with iv, 9, 10; iv, 11-13, with v, 1; v, 2-4, with v, 5ff.); that in several instances a connection can be established only by artificial means (compare iv, 4, with iv, 5; iv, 8, with iv, 9, 10; iv, 11-13, with v, 1-4); that ideas are expressed which were not current until after the time of Micah (compare iv, 11-13, with Ezek. xxxviii, xxxix); and that certain relations are pre-

supposed which are foreign to Micah's era (for example, iv, 6-8; v, 1ff.). This series of objections would have considerable weight if it were necessary to take chapters iv, v as containing one discourse, delivered at one and the same time. But, as soon as it is recognized that the chapters contain a collection of oracles, delivered at different times, under different circumstances, growing out of different historical situations, the objections lose their force, unless it can be shown that the separate oracles contain linguistic, historical, or religious features that militate against the authorship of Micah. For a detailed discussion the reader should turn to the commentary on these chapters; here it may be sufficient to say that the arguments against the authenticity of the chapters or of any part of them do not appear to be in any sense conclusive.

So far as the contents of vi, 1—vii, 6, are concerned, this section might, according to Nowack's admission, have proceeded from Micah. The objections to this portion are based chiefly on the differences in style and intensity of emotion as compared with the earlier chapters of the book. But these differences are by no means so marked as to exclude unity of authorship. True, the conditions presupposed in the verses are not quite the same as those presupposed in chapters i—iii; the corruption seems to be more extensive and more marked. This fact in itself would account for the depth of feeling shown by the author of these utterances; this intenser feeling, in turn, would lead to more earnest and passionate appeals; and, surely, it would be only natural that these should influence the style. Nowhere can be discovered anything that makes impossible the belief in Micah's authorship.

If the testimony of the title in i, 1, can at all be relied upon, the prophet lived through a very eventful period (see above, pp. 357ff.). In that general period the reign of Ahaz seems to furnish a most suitable occasion for these utterances, as a few comparisons will show. Ahaz was inclined toward the worship of foreign deities (2 Kings xvi, 10ff.); the complaint of Jehovah in Mic. vi, 1ff., implies that the people were forsaking

him. Ahaz caused his son to pass through the fire (2 Kings xvi, 3; compare Mic. vi, 7). Ahaz walked "in the ways of the kings of Israel" (2 Kings xvi, 3); Mic. vi, 16, complains, "The statutes of Omri are kept, and all the works of the house of Ahab, and ye walk in their counsels." To the reign of Jotham, only a year or two before Ahaz's accession, belong the prophecies in Isa. ii—v; and it may be interesting to compare Mic. vii, 1-6, with Isa. iii, 1-15; especially Mic. vii, 5, 6, with Isa. iii, 5; compare also Mic. vii, 4, with Isa. x, 3.

Though it has become customary, since the days of Ewald, to assign chapters vi, vii to the dark reign of Manasseh, written either by Micah himself, who might easily have continued his ministry into the reign of Manasseh, or by some other prophet, whose name has not been preserved, it seems more probable that vi, 1—vii, 6, comes from near the beginning of Micah's ministry, the reign of Ahaz. Kirkpatrick says rightly, "Chapter vi, at any rate, is a piece of public preaching which is more likely to belong to the time of Ahaz than to that of Manasseh, when the true prophets were silenced."

Most modern commentators agree in regarding vii, 7-20, as the product of a later age. Wellhausen says, "Between vii, 6, and vii, 7, there yawns a century." In his commentary he makes the interval even longer, for he places vii, 7-20, in the postexilic period. Nowack, "vii, 7ff., cannot possibly be attributed to Micah; for what in vi, 1—vii, 6, is yet in prospect is in vii, 7ff., actually come to pass—Zion suffers for her sins, and the prophet looks to a better time, when Jehovah will again interest himself on behalf of his people and build the walls of the city." Marti, following Stade's suggestion, divides vii, 7-20, into two sections, 7-13, 18b, 19a, and 14-18a, 19b, 20; both sections he assigns to the second century B. C. G. A. Smith calls vii, 7-20, "a canto of several fragments, from periods far apart in the history of Israel."

The chief ground for assigning the verses to the exilic or postexilic period is the alleged fact that in them the exile is presupposed as an accomplished fact; and some hold that even

the return and the later dispersion of the Jews are things of the past. However, this is by no means self-evident; even the expression in verse 11, "a day for building thy walls," does not establish the truth of the claim. All the eighth century prophets seem to expect the divine judgment, which they announce, to fall in the immediate future; all expect it to take the form of an invasion, in which the land will be overrun; and Micah certainly announces the destruction of the capital (iii, 12); all expect the preservation of a remnant; and all make glorious promises to this remnant. But if Micah expected the salvation of a remnant, and if he had any desire of picturing the future exaltation of this remnant, was it not perfectly natural for him to include in his picture of the restoration the rebuilding of the city, even though its destruction was still in the future? In this Micah does not stand alone (compare Jer. xxxiii, 10ff.). Hence it is quite possible to regard "a day for building thy walls" a part of the prophetic picture of the future calamity and restoration. The case is entirely different in Isa. xl—lxvi, with which Wellhausen compares these verses. Isa. xl—lxvi contains numerous unambiguous references to the Babylonian exile as a present fact; but in Mic. vii, 7-20, there is not a single clear reference of that character.

On the other hand, it has been argued that Assyria was the world power (verse 12), and that in verse 14 there may be an allusion to the ravaging of the territory north of Esdraelon and east of the Jordan by Tiglath-pileser III in 734. Hence vii, 14, has been taken to favor the view that vii, 7-20, belong to the same period to which were assigned vi, 1—vii, 6 (see above; but compare comment on vii, 14). When it is possible to base two so widely different conclusions upon the historical allusions in an utterance it must be admitted that the historical background is uncertain.

The argument from style is in this case of more weight. Even the reader of the English translation must be impressed with the marked differences as he passes from vii, 6, to vii, 7ff.

Certainly a change in style would be expected when an author passes from exhortation to supplication or praise, as is done in these verses. But the closer one studies vii, 7-20, the stronger becomes the impression that the differences in style are almost too great to be compatible with unity of authorship, and the firmer becomes the conviction that either Micah was a man of peculiarly vivid imagination, of unusual poetic genius and wonderful dramatic power, or the verses cannot come from him. To a later date point also the similarities with some of the later psalms. G. A. Smith may be correct, therefore, in calling vii, 7-20, "a canto of several fragments, from periods far apart in the history of Israel" (see further the comments on vii, 7-20).

A few words must be added concerning the arrangement of the book. It falls naturally into three parts: chapters i, ii; chapters iii—v; chapters vi, vii; each part beginning with "Hear ye." Each part contains a description of the present corruption, an announcement of imminent judgment, and one or more promises of a bright and glorious future. In a broad sense each section marks an advance over the preceding. It would be erroneous, however, to suppose that the three parts, even aside from vii, 7-20, represent three connected discourses of the prophet delivered to the people on three different occasions. They are rather three collections of the essential contents of oral utterances of the prophet during his entire prophetic activity. The brief notes or summaries were arranged in the order in which they are found now either by Micah or by a later collector, probably the latter. The principle of arrangement is not chronological, but, in a broad sense, logical; that is, the collector or collectors kept in mind the general scheme—corruption, judgment, salvation of a remnant, promise—but within the general scheme itself the separate utterances were arranged with less care and without the introduction of any connecting links. As a result abruptness in transition is frequent, and it is difficult at times to trace the exact line of thought.

Contents and Teaching of the Book.

Contents.—The Book of Micah falls naturally into three parts. The first part (chapters i, ii) begins with a majestic description of the approach of Jehovah in judgment (i, 2-4). His anger has been aroused by the transgression of Israel and Judah; and in punishment he will reduce Samaria, the capital of the northern kingdom, to a heap of ruins (6, 7). But the calamity will not stop there; it will advance to the very gates of Jerusalem (9). The prophet, moved by sympathy for the stricken country, bewails the devastation of his home district; in a series of agonizing cries, making extensive use of paronomasia, he describes the fate of several cities and villages located in it (8-16).

This lament is followed by a woe upon the proud nobles of the realm, whose deeds of violence have made inevitable the judgment (ii, 1, 2). The punishment will be meted out according to the *lex talionis;* they have robbed others, therefore they will be robbed of their ill-gotten possessions (3, 4). The prophet foresees an attempt on the part of the people and the false prophets to silence him by declaring his utterances to be absurd; hence he insists that his preaching is in perfect accord with the ethical principles underlying Jehovah's government of the world. God promises good only to him who walks uprightly; this Israel has failed to do, hence disaster must come (5-9). The sentence of verses 3, 4 is reiterated; the rascals must leave the land—"this is not your resting place" (10). The prophet next describes the kind of prophet they would like to hear, one who promises peace and prosperity, who flatters the self-righteous hypocrites (11). Micah is not one of these; he can declare only what Jehovah desires, and at present the divinely given message is one of judgment. Nevertheless, it is not one of unmitigated doom. He too has a message of salvation, though not for the immediate future, nor for all the listeners, but for the loyal worshipers of Jehovah. These, purified through suffering, will be assembled

again; Jehovah himself will redeem them and restore them to their old home (12, 13).

The second part (chapters iii—v) opens with a vivid description of the present corruption; civil and ecclesiastical leaders abuse the privileges of their offices. All humane feelings have been stifled (iii, 1-3). These human brutes Jehovah will forsake in the hour of judgment (4). For the decline in virtue the false prophets are largely responsible; they have become mercenary and care nothing for the truth; the priests also are actuated by a spirit of avarice and greed. Yet in spite of the universal corruption they presume to claim Jehovah's favor—"Is not Jehovah in the midst of us? no evil shall come upon us" (5-11). On account of this failure to do the will of Jehovah the capital will be completely ruined (12).

But the ruin will not continue forever. There will be a turn for the better. A remnant will survive the judgment; and this remnant, restored to its former home, will be raised to highest honor and glory. This exaltation is the subject of chapters iv, v. However, these two chapters do not form one single, continuous discourse; they are rather a collection of oracles, all dealing with the same subject, namely, the Messianic outlook, but they do not come from the same period in the prophet's activity, and they describe the Messianic age from various points of view. The first section presents a sublime picture of Zion's future glory as the center of the universal religion (iv, 1-5). When the era of Messianic peace dawns the dispersed of Israel will have a share in its glory. Jehovah will bring back and heal a remnant of those whom in his anger he cast off. This remnant will grow into a strong nation that will suffer no more from weak and incompetent rulers, for Jehovah himself will rule forever (6-8).

The distant future is bright, but the immediate future is full of gloom and despair. The prophet sees the impending destruction; he hears the lamentation (9); nevertheless, with sublime faith he predicts, "Jehovah will redeem thee" (10). From a different period in the prophet's ministry comes the

next oracle, which again starts from the present calamity but ends with the triumphant exhortation, "Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion; for I will make thy horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass; and thou shalt beat in pieces many peoples: and I will devote their gain unto Jehovah, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth" (11-13).

The next section again takes a brief glance at the present distress and shame (v, 1), but immediately it soars to the loftiest heights of Messianic promise (2ff.). The prophet introduces the personal Messiah, to be born in Beth-lehem (2); though temporary distress is inevitable, the sequel will be glorious (3). Like a kind shepherd will the Messiah feed his flock (4); he is peace personified, and his rule will be peace. Should an enemy attack the kingdom of God there will be a superabundance of leaders to hasten to its defense (5, 6).

The prophet proceeds to consider the restored nation's relation to other peoples; to some it will dispense blessings and prove a source of increased vitality (7); to others it will be terror and destruction (8). That Israel may be successful in its conquests is his prayer (9).

When the people have learned to rely upon Jehovah he will destroy all implements of war (10, 11), and remove all witchcraft and soothsayers (12). Idolatry will come to an end (13, 14); and Jehovah will be the avenger of his people (15).

In the third part (chapters vi, vii) the standpoint of the speaker changes. Once more the whole nation is addressed. In vi, 1—vii, 6, is a dramatic representation of Jehovah in a controversy with Israel. Jehovah opens the case by inquiring what he has done to merit Israel's ingratitude and neglect (vi, 1-5). The people do not deny the truth of the accusation implied in the words of Jehovah; apparently they are ready to admit their guilt, but they plead ignorance of the true requirements of Jehovah. They are willing to take upon themselves the severest tasks if they can only secure the divine favor (6, 7). To this plea the prophet replies that there is no excuse for their ignorance. Jehovah has made known his will again

and again: "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (8).

With verse 9 begins a new accusation and denunciation. Jehovah is the speaker. He denounces, in righteous indignation, the injustice, oppression, and violence prevalent in the capital, and threatens judgment in the form of an invasion, desolation, disgrace (9-16). The accusation continues in chapter vii; but now the prophet is the speaker. He describes the desperate condition of the nation: anarchy, injustice, judicial corruption, the dissolution of the tenderest ties of family relation (1-6).

Here another change of speaker occurs. The penitent community, the remnant now sitting in darkness, addresses Jehovah; it pleads for deliverance, and expresses the assurance that Jehovah will bring it out into the light, and give to it victory over the arrogant enemy (7-10). To this expression of confidence Jehovah, or the prophet in his name, replies with words of encouragement; the loyalty of the petitioner will be rewarded with a glorious restoration (11-13). In verse 14 the prophet becomes the spokesman of the people. He pleads for the fulfillment of the promise of the restoration, and rejoices in the terror and humiliation of the nations of the world (14-17). The Book of Micah closes with a doxology. The prophet, reveling in the thought of a glorious future, sings a hymn in honor of Jehovah, who alone is God; he celebrates the divine attributes of loving-kindness, compassion, and faithfulness as about to be manifested in the deliverance promised by Jehovah (18-20).

Teaching.—The teaching of Micah is simple and forceful. In many respects it resembles that of Amos and Hosea; hence it seems unnecessary to outline in detail the various points of his teaching (see Amos, pp. 205ff.; Hosea, pp. 29ff.). A few points, however, deserve special mention. His theology insists on the holiness of Jehovah, and the universality and righteousness of the divine government. Jehovah deals, even

with Israel, on the basis of ethical principles. So long as his people will do right they will enjoy the divine favor (ii, 7); when they turn against him they must suffer punishment. His good will is secured not by carefully observing the ritual, or by bringing sacrifices, whatever their intrinsic value, but by a life in accord with principles of righteousness, by the diligent practice of kindness and brotherliness, and by a living fellowship with God in the spirit of humility, which should ever govern the intercourse of weak and sinful man with a holy and perfect God (vi, 6-8).

The prophet did not deceive himself into an expectation that his high moral and religious ideals would be sufficiently attractive to bring about a complete transformation in the whole nation. He foresaw that the majority would continue in rebellion, and that, therefore, a destructive blow must fall which would make an end of the national existence of both Israel and Judah. But he saw with equal clearness that a remnant would be saved, and that under the Messianic king this remnant would enjoy a life of permanent peace and prosperity (v, 2-6). Through the moral influence going out from these faithful ones (v, 7) the knowledge of Jehovah would spread to all the nations, and all would flock to him (iv, 1-4). In his description of the Messianic king Micah passes beyond Amos and Hosea (v, 2-5).

A comparison of Micah with his greater contemporary, Isaiah, is of interest. The two "resemble each other in style, in thought, in topics, and even in phrases"; yet the contrasts between the two in origin, training, and sphere of work are equally marked. The one was a city prophet, of high social standing, the counselor of kings; the other a simple countryman, born of obscure parentage, in close touch and sympathy with the peasant class. However, both cherish lofty conceptions of the character of God and of the obligations resting upon the people of Jehovah, and both have firmly established convictions concerning the nature and ultimate triumph of the kingdom of God.

Never in the history of the Hebrew people, and one might almost say never in the history of the human race, arose within one brief lifetime (760-735 B. C.) four men who have left a greater and more permanent impress upon the religious development of the world than did the four divinely inspired leaders, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah. They, more than any other set of men during the Old Testament period, were responsible for the preservation and development of the religion out of which sprang, at a later period, the religion of life and power, Christianity.

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MICAH.

CHAPTER I.

THE word of the LORD that came to [a]Micah the Morasthite in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, *and* Hezekiah, kings of Judah, [b]which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem. 2 [1]Hear, all ye people; [c]hearken, O earth, and [2]all that therein is: and let the Lord GOD [d]be witness against you, the Lord from [e]his holy temple.

[a] Jer. 26. 18.—[b] Amos 1. 1.—[1] Heb. *Hear, ye people, all of them.*—[c] Deut. 32. 1; Isa. 1. 2.

[2] Heb. *the fullness thereof.*—[d] Psa. 50. 7; Mal. 3. 5.—[e] Psa. 11. 4; Jonah 2. 7; Hab. 2. 20.

CHAPTER I.

1. *Title.* Indicates the author and the time of his activity. On the person of the prophet see Introduction, p. 356; on the chronological data, pp. 361ff. **Samaria**—The capital of the northern kingdom (i, 6). **Jerusalem**—The capital of the southern kingdom (iii, 12).

JUDGMENT UPON ISRAEL AND JUDAH, 2–16.

Micah is impelled by the Divine Spirit to announce the destruction of Samaria and Jerusalem, the capitals of Israel and Judah. The latter may not suffer as soon as the former; nevertheless, escape is impossible. The prophecy opens with a sublime apostrophe to the nations of the earth and a magnificent picture of the approach of Jehovah in judgment (2–4). Samaria will be laid in ruins on account of her sins (5–7). In time the judgment will fall also upon Judah (8–16). The announcement to Judah the prophet puts into the form of a lament over its fall, a lament indicating the deep emotion which sways the prophet as he contemplates the terrible calamity.

The judgment upon Samaria, 2–7.

Verses 2–4 picture the coming of Jehovah in judgment. **All ye people; . . . O earth, . . . all that therein is**—A sublime apostrophe to the whole earth. All the nations of the earth are to listen and take warning, for a world judgment is decreed by Jehovah. Because these verses speak of a world judgment, while ordinarily the book speaks of judgment upon Israel or Judah only, Stade and Marti consider 2–4 a later interpolation by some one who could not understand how Judah and Israel alone could be punished, when other nations deserved even more the divine judgment. This conclusion does not follow necessarily; as an introduction to a more specific announcement these verses are perfectly natural. Similar expressions are found in other parts of the Old Testament (Deut. iv, 26; xxx, 19; xxxi, 28; Isa. i, 2). In 1 Kings xxii, 28, the words may be a later interpolation from this passage (compare LXX.). **And let the Lord Jehovah be witness against you**—Perhaps better, *that the Lord Jehovah will be witness against you. Be witness* is equivalent to *be accuser.* Since in 2a the nations are addressed, it seems only natural to interpret these words as addressed to the same. Micah means to announce the coming of Jehovah to a general judgment, though at present he will confine himself to Israel and Judah (5ff.). To understand verse 2 as addressed to Israel, "people" (literally, *peoples*) referring to the tribes constituting the nation, is arbitrary and unnatural, and to refer 2a to the nations and "against you" in 2b to Israel is even less warranted. **From his holy temple**—Not the temple in Jerusalem, but, as "come down" in

3 For, behold, [f]the Lord cometh forth out of his [g]place, and will come down, and tread upon the [h]high places of the earth. 4 And [i]the mountains shall be molten under him, and the valleys shall be cleft, as wax before the fire, *and* as the waters *that are* poured down [3]a steep place. 5 For the transgression of Jacob *is* all this, and for the sins of the house of Israel. What *is* the transgression of Jacob? *is it* not Samaria? and what *are* the high places of Judah? *are they* not

[f] Isa. 26. 21.—[g] Psa. 115. 3.—[h] Deut. 32. 13; 33. 29; Amos 4. 13.—[i] Judg. 5. 5; Psa. 97. 5; Isa. 64. 1–3; Amos 9. 5; Hab. 3. 6, 10.—[3] Heb. *a descent.*

verse 3 shows, the dwelling place of Jehovah on high (Psa. xi, 4). On *holy* see comment on Joel ii, 1; Zech. xiv, 20.

For—Verse 3 does not state the reason why the people should give ear; it is rather the continuation of the statement in 2b. A better translation would be, *Yea, behold.* **Cometh**—More accurately, *is about to come* (G.-K., 116p.). The event is thought to be imminent. The language of verses 3, 4 is highly poetic. As frequently in the Old Testament (for example, Psa. xviii, 7ff.), verse 4 describes the appearance of Jehovah in the imagery of a thunderstorm, while verse 3 seems to think of him as a mighty hero leaving his castle and going forth to war. **His place**—Temple (verse 2). **Come down**—From heaven to earth. **Tread upon the high places**—See on Amos iv, 13.

The present Hebrew text does not show the several clauses of verse 4 in their logical order. A more natural arrangement would be, "And the mountains shall be melted under him as wax before the fire, and the valleys shall be cleft as waters that are poured down a steep place." Whether or not this was the original order, the present arrangement being due to a later copyist, cannot be determined. The picture is that of a terrible thunderstorm. **Molten**—Some have interpreted this simile of the flashes of lightning, which seem to dissolve the mountains. It is better, however, to think of streams of water that pour from heaven until the very mountains appear to be dissolved by them (Judg. v, 5; Psa. lxviii, 8). **Cleft**—This is a continuation of the first simile. The water rushes on with such force that it cuts out deep channels, until the valleys seem to be cleft asunder. The force of these torrents is likened to the force of water falling over a high precipice. Both similes imply utter destruction, and they are intended to teach that, when Jehovah passes through the earth in judgment, nothing but ruin and desolation is left behind.

5. In this instance the judge of all the earth comes for a specific purpose, to execute judgment upon Israel. **Jacob . . . Israel**—Some suppose that Jacob means the whole of the chosen people, including Judah, while Israel is thought to refer to the northern kingdom only; but there seems to be insufficient warrant for this differentiation. In view of the distinction between north and south in 5b it would be natural to expect the same distinction in 5a. Since "Jacob" designates the northern kingdom in 5b, it can hardly be used of Judah in 5a. Hence the question suggests itself, whether in the place of "Israel" the text did not read originally "Judah." If the present text is correct "Israel" and "Jacob" in 5a should probably be regarded as synonyms, both denoting the whole nation, which only in 5b is divided into north and south, called Jacob and Judah respectively. **Transgression**—A weak reproduction of the original. The rendering "rebellion," or "apostasy," which implies taking a determined hostile attitude, comes nearer the original. **High places**—The technical Old Testament term for the local sanctuaries scattered throughout the land; they were so called because they were commonly located on natural or artificial elevations. Nominally the worship

Jerusalem? 6 Therefore I will make Samaria [k]as an heap of the field, *and* as plantings of a vineyard: and I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley, and I will [l]discover the foundations thereof. 7 And all the graven mages thereof shall be beaten to pieces, and all the [m]hires thereof shall be burned with the fire, and all the idols thereof will

[k] 2 Kings 19. 25; chap. 3. 12.

[l] Ezek. 13. 14.——[m] Hos. 2. 5, 12.

practiced there was in honor of Jehovah, but it became so permeated with immoral, heathenish elements that it threatened the very life of the Jehovah religion. As a result the prophets hurl the severest condemnation against this cult; and finally, under Josiah (621 B. C.), worship at the local sanctuaries was abolished (compare also 2 Kings xviii, 4). Instead of "high places" three of the most important ancient versions present a different reading; Peshitto reads "sin"; LXX. and Targum, "sin of the house of." If either of these is accepted as original the parallelism between the two parts of 5b will resemble more closely that between the two parts of 5a. If the present Hebrew text is followed, "high places" must be understood as practically equivalent to "transgression." The suggestion that 5b is a later marginal gloss to 5a is without sufficient warrant. **What is the transgression**—Literally, *Who is. Transgression*, the abstract, is here equivalent to the concrete *transgressor*, or better, *originator of transgression*. The thought is that the apostasy of the people is due to the influence that went out from the two capitals. Here the court and nobility were to be found; and it is the teaching of all the eighth century prophets that these were in a large measure responsible for the sins of the people.

The indictment is followed by the announcement of judgment; verses 6, 7 deal with Samaria, the rest of the chapter with Judah. The former will be destroyed. **As an heap**—Literally "into an heap." It will become like a heap of stones in a field. The prophet seems to think of stones gathered out of the field by the husbandman. The emendation "into jungle," favored by some, is not needed. **As plantings of a vineyard**—R. V., "as places for planting vineyards." Again better, *into*. If the city was allowed to remain in ruins, in time people would plant vineyards on the sides of the fertile hill upon which Samaria was located. The rest of verse 6 presents a picture of complete ruin. Houses and walls will be broken down to their very foundations (Psa. cxxxvii, 7); and since the land is to be cultivated, the stones are removed by hurling them down the hill on which the city was built (1 Kings xvi, 24). Cheyne quotes from a report describing the ruins of Samaria in modern times as follows: "There is every appearance of the ancient buildings having been destroyed, and their materials cast down from the brow of the hill, in order to clear the ground for cultivation; masses of stones are thus seen hanging on the steep sides of the hill, accidentally stopped in the progress of their descent by the rude dykes and terraces separating the fields. . . . The materials of the ruins . . . are piled up in large heaps, or used in the construction of rude stone fences; many of these heaps of stones are seen in the plains at the foot of the hill." A later destruction of Samaria by John Hyrcanus is described by Josephus (*Antiquities*, xiii, 10, 3).

With the city the images of the gods will be destroyed, which will prove their impotence and nothingness (Isa. ii, 20; xxx, 22). **Graven images**—Representations of deities made of stone; the expression "shall be beaten to pieces" would hardly be applicable to wooden idols (compare v, 13). **Hires**—Refers to the love gifts offered by the worshipers to the illegitimate deities, in

I lay desolate: for she gathered *it* of the hire of an harlot, and they shall return to the hire of an harlot.

[n] Isa. 21. 3; 22. 4; Jer. 4. 19.—[o] Isa. 20. 2–4.—[p] Job 30. 29; Psa. 102. 6.

8 Therefore [n]I will wail and howl, [o]I will go stripped and naked: [p]I will make a wailing like the dragons,

order to secure their favor; "gifts suspended in temples and sacred places in honor of the gods." These along with the idols and graven images will be swept away in the impending judgment. This will happen because they have gathered it—R. V., "them." This word is not in the original, but the context makes it clear that the images, votive offerings, idols, etc., are meant. **Of the hire of an harlot**—Not to be understood literally of wages of prostitution; nor is the expression to be connected with the licentious practices at the local sanctuaries (Deut. xxiii, 17, 18); it is to be explained rather in the light of Hos. ii, 5ff. Israel had prospered; the prosperity she regarded as the gift of her lovers, the Baalim; it could be called the hire of a harlot, because it allured the pure wife Israel from her faithful husband Jehovah, to run after illegitimate paramours, the gods of the land. The things made of the harlot's hire will return "unto the hire of a harlot." If the preceding figure is continued this must mean that the things will be regarded by the enemies who will despoil the city as gifts from their deities, given in order to increase the love of the worshipers. It is not necessary, however, to suppose that the same figure is retained. The prophet may intend to change it and mean that the things carried away will be used by the captors in their idolatrous worship; they will present them to the deities to secure their favor. If so, the second "hire of a harlot" is equivalent in meaning to "hire" earlier in the verse. It was customary in ancient times, when a city was captured, to carry away its idols and temple treasures (Joel iii, 5; Hos. x, 6; Isa. xlvi, 1, 2; Dan. i, 3).

The suggestion of Wellhausen, favored by other scholars, to read "her Asherahs" (v, 14) for "her hires" is worthy of notice. The emendation is based upon the opinion that in view of the expressions "her graven images" and "her idols" in the two parallel lines we should expect a similar expression in the third line.

Lament over the fall of Judah, 8–16.

The sins of the south (verse 5) demand the punishment of Judah. The judgment is already present to the vision of the prophet, and in verses 8–16 he gives expression to his grief over the fall of the southern kingdom. In a series of plays upon their names he pictures in 10–15 the fate awaiting the cities and villages in the south. In 16 he calls upon Zion to mourn, because her children have gone into exile.

The speaker in verse 8 is the prophet as an individual, not the nation with which the prophet may identify himself. He bewails the calamity that has befallen Samaria, in part because he sympathizes with the inhabitants of the north as fellow Israelites, but chiefly because he realizes the danger threatening his native state (verse 9), "for it is come even unto Judah; it reacheth unto the gate of *my* people, even to Jerusalem." Micah was a native of Judah, hence it is but natural that he should enter with deeper compassion into the experiences of his own people. In a similar manner, Hosea, a native of Israel, feels more deeply for the north than Amos, a native of Judah. **Go stripped and naked**—This is to be understood not in the sense of being stripped of all clothing and entirely naked, but in the sense of barefooted and stripped of the upper garment (compare Isa. xx, 2). This act was a symbol both of mourning and of exile; by it the prophet gives expression to his grief, and at the same time seeks to exhibit the fate which the na-

and mourning as the [4]owls. 9 For [5]her wound *is* incurable; for [q]it is come unto Judah; he is come unto the gate of my people, *even* to Jerusalem. 10 [r]Declare ye *it* not at Gath, weep ye not at all: in the house

[4] Heb. *daughters of the owl.*—[5] Or, she is *grievously sick of her wounds.*

[q] 2 Kings 18. 13; Isa. 8. 7, 8.—[r] 2 Sam. 1. 20.

tion must suffer. **Dragons, . . . owls**—Better, R. V., "jackals, . . . ostriches." The long piteous cry of the jackal, which Riehm describes as a "heart-rending wail, sometimes like the whimpering and the loud cry of children," and which in its penetration is "suggestive of a lost soul," and the "fearful screech" of the ostrich, a "peculiar call, now a shrill outcry, now a low moan," aptly describe the mournful wail of the grief-stricken prophet (for similar comparisons see Job xxx, 29; Isa. xxxviii, 14; lix, 11).

Verse 9 points to the impending ruin of Judah as one of the reasons for the grief and consternation of the prophet. He knows that, if Samaria falls, the enemy will sooner or later attack the south. This fear was seen to be justified when in 702–701 the army of Sennacherib advanced to the very gates of Jerusalem (Isa. xxxvi, 37; compare Isa. i, 7). **Wound**—More accurately, *stripes;* the devastation wrought by the enemy. **Incurable**—Nothing can cure the effects of the judgment, or prevent the spread of the disaster; it will steadily spread until the very heart, Jerusalem, becomes affected. Not even the presence of Jehovah in the temple can save the city.

It is not possible to reproduce in English the plays upon words so evident in the original of 10–15; sometimes it is difficult to apprehend the allusion of the prophet, and in more than one place the correctness of the present Hebrew text is not beyond question. The word plays are not due to the playful mood of the prophet. "He could not possibly jest about the fate of his friends. No, he is in sober earnest, and sees a preordained correspondence between names and fortunes." Some consider the artistic character of the passage sufficient reason for denying the verses to Micah. The apostrophes to the cities remind one of Isa. x, 28ff. It is possible that Micah, like Isaiah, intends to describe the route taken by the enemy toward the capital, though in view of the uncertainty with regard to some of the cities this cannot be proved. If this is the prophet's purpose, Micah, unlike Isaiah, expects the advance to come from the west, the territory of the Philistines; and this is the direction followed by Sennacherib in 702–701.

10. The prophet fears the malicious joy of the heathen neighbors, which would be an insult to Jehovah. Hence he pleads with the people not to permit the news to become known in the surrounding territory. **Declare ye it not at Gath**—R. V., "Tell it not in Gath." Gath was one of the five chief cities of the Philistines (see on Amos i, 6–8; vi, 2). The words are found also in 2 Sam. i, 20; they may have become a proverbial saying. **Weep ye not at all**—This is the literal rendering of the present Hebrew text; but (1) the form of the verb is unusual; (2) in all the other instances each proper noun is connected with only one verb. For these reasons many are inclined to accept as original the common LXX. reading, "weep ye not in Acco." Acco, the later Ptolemais, was situated on the Mediterranean coast north of Mount Carmel. In this passage it would represent the heathen neighbors in the north, as Gath represents those in the south. According to Judg. i, 31, the Canaanites were not driven out from Acco. Any disaster of the Hebrews would cause them to rejoice, hence they are to be kept in ignorance. If we assume a contraction for the purpose of making the rhythm smoother or producing a more perfect

of [6]Aphrah [s]roll thyself in the dust.
11 Pass ye away, [7]thou [8]inhabitant of Saphir, having thy [t]shame naked: the inhabitant of [9]Zaanan came not

[6] That is, *Dust.*——[s] Jer. 6. 26.——[7] Or, *thou that dwellest fairly.*——[8] Heb. *inhabitress.*——[t] Isa. 20. 4; 47. 2, 3; Jer. 13. 22; Nah. 3. 5.——[9] Or, *the country of flocks.*

paronomasia, this translation might perhaps be justified by the present Hebrew text. However, such contractions are unusual, and it may be better to suppose that the original text was accidentally altered as a result of the similarity in Hebrew between the word reproduced in English by "at all" (literally, *to weep*) and the original of "in Acco." The other LXX. rendering, "in Bochim," is less probable. **The house of Aphrah**—R. V., "Beth-le-aphrah," which means "house of dust." Throughout these verses the towns are selected not because of their importance, but rather because of the suggestiveness of their names. In Josh. xviii, 23, is mentioned an Ophrah in Benjamin, and with it the place referred to here has often been identified; but since most or all of the places named by Micah seem to be located in the Shephelah, between Judah and Philistia, Beth-le-aphrah should probably be looked for in the same district. Thus far, however, no satisfactory identification has been proposed, and the various emendations suggested are equally unsatisfactory. The element *Aphrah* has been compared with the second element in *Beto-gabra*, that is, Eleutheropolis, and with the last element in the name *Wady-el-Ghufr*, south of the same place. **Roll thyself in the dust**—R. V., "have I rolled myself." The latter reproduces the present Hebrew text, the former follows a Masoretic suggestion. LXX. and other ancient versions read, "roll yourselves," thus coördinating this verb with the other two in the verse, and this last reading may be original. The verb is found in three other places in the Old Testament, and in all three it is translated "wallow," so that there seems no justification for rendering it here "besprinkle" (with dust or ashes); and such rendering would greatly weaken the thought of the prophet. Sprinkling ashes or dust upon the head was a common symbol of mourning (2 Sam. xiii, 19; Amos ii, 7); the impending calamity will be so severe that extraordinary expressions of grief are called for; instead of sprinkling dust or ashes upon their heads, they are urged to wallow in it.

Much has been said concerning the obscurity of verse 10, but, as interpreted above, it seems perfectly clear and intelligible. The prophet desires that the news of the disaster should be withheld from the surrounding enemies, but, he continues, in Beth-le-aphrah, that is, within your own borders, wallow in the dust as a sign of distress and mourning.

11. The text of this verse is very obscure, which may be due in part to the attempt to secure paronomasia even at the cost of clearness, and in part to corruption of the text. The presence of several grammatical peculiarities and difficulties make it highly probable that the text has suffered in transmission. Various emendations have been proposed, but all are more or less unsatisfactory. The comments here are based upon the assumption that, essentially at least, the text is correct. **Pass ye away**—Into exile. **Saphir**—R. V., "Shaphir"; meaning "Beauty-town." It has been identified with Shamir (Judg. x, 1) in Mount Ephraim; but the town must be looked for farther south, near the border of Philistia. The Shamir in the hill country of Judah (Josh. xv, 48) would be more suitable. Robinson identified Shaphir with one of the mud villages, called *es-Sûâfir*, about three and one half miles southeast of Ashdod; the same place seems to be mentioned by Jerome and Eusebius, and may be the place meant by Micah, but the identification must still be regarded as doubtful. **Having thy shame naked**—R. V., "in nakedness and shame";

forth in the mourning of [10]Bethezel; he shall receive of you his standing. 12 For the inhabitant of Maroth [11]waited carefully for good: but [u]evil came down from the LORD unto the gate of Jerusalem. 13 O thou inhabitant of [x]Lachish, bind the chariot to the swift beast: she *is* the beginning of the sin to the daughter of Zion: for the transgres-

[10] Or, *a place near.*—[11] Or, *was grieved.*

[u] Amos 3. 6.—[x] 2 Kings 18.14, 17.

with shame uncovered. If the text is correct it implies a warning to the inhabitants of Shaphir that they will be driven into exile and subjected to shameful treatment. **Zaanan**—Meaning, perhaps, "March-town." It is not yet identified; perhaps it is identical with *Zenan* (Josh xv, 37). **Came not forth**—R. V., "is not come forth." The inhabitants of Zaanan are so terrified that they do not dare leave their city to fight or to flee. Their terror increases as they learn of the fate of the neighboring towns. **Bethezel**—May be the same as *Azel* (Zech. xiv, 5; see there). The meaning of the name is "The house by the side of," and the city is named here on account of this meaning. Being in the neighborhood, it should become a place of refuge to the fugitives; but in this crisis the city belies its name, for it fails to give support. **He shall receive of you his standing**—R. V., "shall take (better, *takes*) from you the stay thereof." An obscure expression, which has received manifold interpretations. The most satisfactory, though not free from difficulties, is that which makes the sentence to mean that the presence of the enemy in Beth-ezel will make it impossible for any fugitive from Zaanan to take refuge there; therefore, the inhabitants of the latter city, when they hear of the distress of the neighboring town, will hesitate to leave their own.

12. **Maroth**—Means *Bitternesses.* The place is entirely unknown; the context suggests that it was near Jerusalem. **Waiteth carefully**—R. V., "anxiously." The derivation of the verb form is uncertain; the margin, tracing it to another root, translates, "is in travail for," that is, is in pain and distress like a woman in childbirth. If the meaning "wait" is preferred a slight change in the form may be necessary. **For good**—Deliverance from distress, liberty; or, perhaps, the possessions which they have lost or are about to lose. The expression is somewhat peculiar, and the text may be in disorder; but Marti's emendation, "How can Maroth expect anything good?" is no improvement.

12b does not connect with 12a, as if it gave the cause of Maroth's feelings, but with verse 8, giving another reason for the prophet's lamentation —in fact, the chief reason; the "evil," that is, the calamity sent by Jehovah, will threaten the holy city itself. However, it is possible to read "yea' instead of "for" in the beginning of 12a and of 12b; then verse 12 would be a continuation of the preceding verses, containing additional statements concerning the calamity about to fall. 13. **Lachish**—The modern *Tel-el-Hesy*, in the Shephelah, sixteen miles east of Gaza, in a slightly northerly direction; at one time it was a city of considerable importance (Josh. xv, 39; Jer. xxxiv, 7). The play is between the name of the city and the word translated "swift beast" (R. V., "steed"). Lachish is exhorted to flee as swiftly as possible, for the retribution about to overtake her will be exceptionally severe. **Beginning of the sin**—The prophet makes Lachish responsible for the corruption and idolatry of Judah. **Daughter of Zion**—A personification of Jerusalem and its inhabitants, standing here probably in the wider sense of Judah. The last clause seems to imply that in some way the corruption of Israel had been transplanted to Lachish, and from there in turn to Judah; or, perhaps, that corruption similar to that of Israel was found in Lachish.

sions of Israel were found in thee.
14 Therefore shalt thou [y]give pre-
sents [12]to Moresheth-gath: the hous-
es of [13] [z]Achzib *shall be* a lie to the

[y] 2 Sam. 8. 2; 2 Kings 18. 14, 15, 16.—[12] Or *for*.—[13] That is, *a lie*.—[z] Josh. 15. 44.

Certainty on this point cannot be had. If the former is the proper interpretation, nothing is known of how all this came about.

It is difficult to determine who is addressed in 14a; following so closely upon the mention of Lachish, one would naturally suppose that the words are intended for it; but did Moresheth-gath ever belong to Lachish? If the text is correct it seems more satisfactory to interpret the words as addressed to Judah. It will be compelled to give up to the enemy Moresheth-gath (see p. 356). The play is upon *Moresheth* and the Hebrew word *Me'ôrāsāh* (Deut. xxii, 23), "betrothed," though the latter does not occur here. It suggested, however, the word translated "presents" (R. V., "a parting gift"). This word is used in 1 Kings ix, 16, to denote the marriage portion given by the father to his daughter when she is married and leaves his home; in general it "denotes anything belonging to a man which he dismisses or gives up for a time, or forever." In the latter sense the word is used here. Some suppose Moresheth to be addressed, and they change the text so as to read, "Therefore parting gifts shall be given to thee, O Moresheth-gath." **Achzib**—Mentioned again in Josh. xv, 44, along with Mareshah; it may be the same as Chezib (Gen. xxxviii, 5) and Cozeba (1 Chron. iv, 22). It is probably to be identified with the modern *Ain-Kezbeh*, about eight miles north-northeast of *Beit-Jibrin*, in the Shephelah. For "the houses of Achzib" we might read "the two Beth-Achzib," and this is favored by some writers. The second Achzib is thought to be identical with the one mentioned in Josh. xix, 29; Judg. i, 31, and situated in the territory of Asher; which is identified with the modern *Ez-zib*, on the coast between Acco and Tyre. The ordinary translation is to be preferred, since in a list of towns in Judah a city in the far north is out of place. **Lie**—R. V., "deceitful thing." The Hebrew word, *akhzābh*, is applied, in Jer. xv, 18, to a stream that dries up during the hot season, and thus deceives the traveler, who expects to refresh himself with its water (compare also Job vi, 15). **Kings of Israel**—Since the lament is concerning Judah, one would naturally expect "kings" or "king of Judah," unless, on the basis of verse 9, it is assumed that Micah expected the calamity to fall upon the north and south simultaneously. In that case "Israel" might be used of the whole people and "kings" of the monarchs of both Israel and Judah; they would find no refuge in Achzib, either because it is in ruin or because it is occupied by the enemy. If this is the right interpretation the translation "the two Achzib" becomes more probable; the king of Judah flees to the one in the south, the king of Israel to that in the north. Others take "Israel" to be equivalent to "Judah"; but this use of "Israel" is late and would point to a date subsequent to the eighth century B. C. Besides, Judah having but one ruler, what would "kings of Judah" mean? In reply it has been said, (1) that "kings" is equivalent to "dynasty," and that the use of this term is perfectly justified, because when one king suffers the entire dynasty, represented in his person, suffers; (2) that after the prediction of the fall of the northern kingdom (verses 6, 7) "Israel" might be applied to Judah, for the latter was, after the destruction of Samaria, the sole representative of the nation Israel. To most students this reasoning will appear inconclusive, and it may be best to admit that much uncertainty remains.

kings of Israel. **15** Yet will I bring an heir unto thee, O inhabitant of [a]Mareshah: [14]he shall come unto [b]Adullam the glory of Israel. **16** Make thee [c]bald, and poll thee for thy [d]delicate children; enlarge thy baldness as the eagle; for they are gone into captivity from thee.

[a] Josh. 15. 44.——[14] Or, *the glory of Israel shall come*, etc.——[b] 2 Chron. 11. 7.——[c] Job 1. 20; Isa. 15. 2; 22. 12; Jer. 7. 29; 16. 6; 47. 5; 48. 37.——[d] Lam. 4. 5.

Verse 15 contains the last play upon words, *Mārēshāh* and *Yôrēsh*, "the possessor," translated in A. V. "heir," in R. V. "him that shall possess." **Mareshah**—Josh. xv, 44, implies that this place is located near Achzib; it is generally identified with a ruin *Merash*, one mile south of Beit-Jibrin. The Israelites took the city from the Canaanites, but they will be displaced by a new possessor sent by Jehovah. **Adullam**—The reference is to the "cave of Adullam," where David hid himself (1 Sam. xxii, 1ff.). In that out-of-the-way place the "glory," that is, the nobility (Isa. v, 13, 14), will be compelled to seek refuge, or, the wealth and possessions must be hidden, because the rest of the land is overrun by the enemy. Adullam was in the lowland of Judah (Josh. xv, 35), but its exact location is uncertain, though it has been identified with several modern ruins. Clermont-Ganneau identified it with the modern *Aïd-el-mā*, a steep hill covered with ruins, about three miles southeast of Soco and about eight miles northeast of Mareshah. The suggestion has been made to separate the original for Adullam into two words and, with changed vocalization, to translate "forever"; the whole sentence, "the glory of Israel shall set forever." Elhorst thinks that in the text of 15b, which he considers corrupt, another play upon words is hidden; he restores it and translates, "The inhabitants of Adullam shall go under the yoke," that is, into exile.

The above interpretation of 8–15 is based, with few exceptions, upon the present Hebrew text. It must be admitted, however, that in several instances the uncertainty is very great, and many modern scholars treat the Hebrew text with much greater freedom.

With verse 16 the prophet's lament closes. Judah, conceived as a mother, is urged to mourn for her children, because they are doomed to exile. **Delicate**—R. V., "of thy delight"; they are very dear to Judah. **Baldness**—Artificial baldness was a symbol of mourning (Amos viii, 10; Isa. iii, 24); in Lev. xix, 27, 28; Deut. xiv, 1, it is prohibited, probably on account of its heathen associations. The appeal is repeated, in slightly different language, three times for the sake of emphasis. **Eagle**—Better, R. V. margin, "vulture." Baldness is not a mark of the eagle, but it is of the vulture. The prophet probably has in mind the carrion vulture, common in Egypt and in Palestine, the front part of whose head is entirely bald, while the back part has only a thin covering.

CHAPTER II.

Causes of the Impending Judgment, 1–11.

It is commonly assumed that chapters ii and iii form a "single prophecy, the subject of which is the cause of the coming judgment." That both chapters deal substantially with the same subjects is undoubtedly true, but it is equally clear that, as the chapters stand now, there is a distinct break at the close of the second chapter. Hence there seems good reason for separating ii and iii, and joining the latter more closely with iv, v. Only by cutting out ii, 12, 13, can a connection between ii and iii be established; on the other hand, if chapter iii is connected with iv, v, at least some of the reasons for omitting these verses disappear (see p. 363, and on ii, 12, 13). The following comments are based upon the assumption that chapters i, ii form a complete whole, and that chapter ii is intended to

CHAPTER II.

WOE to them [a]that devise iniquity, and [b]work evil upon their beds! when the morning is light, they practice it, because [c]it is in the power of their hand. 2 And they covet [d]fields, and take *them* by violence; and houses, and take *them* away: so they [1]oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage. 3 Therefore thus saith the LORD; Behold, against [e]this family do I devise an evil, from which ye shall not remove your necks; neither shall ye go haughtily: [f]for this time *is* evil.

4 In that day shall *one* [g]take up a parable against you, and [h]lament

[a] Hos. 7. 6.—[b] Psa. 36 4.—[c] Gen. 31. 29.—[d] Isa. 5. 8.—[1] Or, *defraud*.—[e] Jer. 8. 3.—[f] Amos 5. 13; Eph. 5. 16.—[g] Hab. 2. 6.—[h] 2 Sam. 1. 17.

set forth the causes making inevitable the judgment threatened in the preceding chapter. It opens with a woe upon the proud nobles, who have become misleaders of the people (ii, 1–4). The accused resent the denunciation; the attempt is made to silence the prophet, and to find consolation in the message of the mercenary prophets. But, the prophet insists, there is no escape from the wrath of Jehovah; as they have driven the poor from their homes, so they will be driven from their possessions into exile (5–11). From this exile only a remnant will return under the leadership of Jehovah (12, 13).

1, 2. A vivid description of the corrupt conduct of the aristocracy. **Work evil upon their beds**—To be distinguished from "they practice it" in the next clause; the first refers to the preparation of the ways and means with which they carry out their evil schemes. In the darkness of the night they lay their plans; in the morning they carry them out. **In the power of their hand**—No one can prevent their crimes, for their wealth and power enable them to do anything they please (vii, 3).

The general accusation in verse 1 is followed by a specific condemnation of the greed and avarice manifesting itself in the attempts to rob poor property owners of their holdings. Elijah (1 Kings xxi) and Isaiah (v, 8ff.) championed the rights of the common people against similar outrages. The accumulation of wealth and resources in the hands of a few seriously threatened the national stability and permanence. "The old Israelite state was so entirely based on the participation of every freeman in the common soil, and so little recognized the mere possession of capital, that men were in danger of losing civil rights along with house and fields, and becoming mere hirelings or even slaves." **Oppress**—Margin, "defraud.' **Heritage**—The hereditary portion of the land assigned to each family at the time of the conquest and guarded by the "Jubilee Law" (Lev. xxv, 8ff.; compare Num. xxvii, 1–11; Deut. xxvii, 17).

Verses 3, 4 announce the judgment. **Therefore**—Because they devise evil. **I devise an evil**—Or, *calamity* (Amos iii, 6). Jehovah will bring upon the evil doers a calamity from which there can be no escape. **This family**—May, perhaps, include the whole nation (Amos iii, 1), though it could be used of Judah alone. **Shall not remove your necks**—The evil is likened to a yoke that rests heavily upon the neck and cannot be shaken off. **Haughtily**—The pressure of the yoke makes impossible walking with heads erect, a sign of pride and arrogance. Evidently the prophet expects the calamity to be inflicted by a foreign conqueror, who will place his yoke upon the nation's neck. **This time is evil**—R. V., "it is an evil time." The expression is used again in Amos v, 13, but with a slightly different meaning.

The downfall of Israel will cause rejoicing among the conquerors and lamentation among the conquered. **Parable**—Heb. *māshāl*, which denotes any figurative saying; here probably a "taunt song" (compare Isa. xiv, 4; Hab. ii, 6). **Against you**—By the suc-

[2]with a doleful lamentation, *and* say, We be utterly spoiled: [i]he hath changed the portion of my people: how hath he removed *it* from me!

[3]turning away he hath divided our fields. 5 Therefore thou shalt have none that shall [k]cast a cord by lot in the congregation of the LORD.

[2] Heb. *with a lamentation of lamentations.*

[i] Chap. 1. 15.—[3] Or, *instead of restoring.*—[k] Deut. 32. 8, 9.

cessful opponents. This seems to be the most natural interpretation, though the Hebrew does not make it absolutely necessary to suppose that it is to be uttered by the victorious conqueror. **Lamentation**—To be uttered by Israel over the calamity suffered (Amos v, 16). A supposed play upon words in the original, Pusey reproduces by, "They shall wail a wail of woe." The whole verse is in poetic form and may be rendered more accurately:

> In that day men will raise against you a taunting song,
> They will lament a lamentation:
> It is finished, they shall say,
> We are utterly ruined;
> The portion of my people he changeth,
> How doth he remove it from (literally, *for*) me;
> Unto the rebellious he divideth our fields.

The purport of the verse is clear. The enemies will taunt Israel because their God has failed to deliver them; Israel will lament because enemies have taken possession of the holy land and divided it among themselves. At the same time it is recognized that all this is Jehovah's doing; he takes back the land formerly assigned to Israel and hands it over to the enemy.

The Hebrew text of verse 4 contains several peculiarities; the most marked of these are the abrupt transition, without even the slightest indication, from the enemies to Israel (lines 1 and 2), and the unexpected change from plural to singular and singular to plural (lines 4–7; "we" . . . "my" . . . "me" . . . "our"); besides, LXX. varies considerably from the present Hebrew text. For these reasons modern commentators are inclined to regard the text as more or less corrupt. Nowack, following Stade, reconstructs it, partly on the basis of LXX., and partly by conjecture, so that it reads, "Then will be uttered over you a proverb and a lamentation, as follows:

> The portion of my people is divided off with a measuring rod, there is none to give it back;
> To those who have led us into exile are apportioned our fields; we are utterly ruined."

The lament itself Marti restores:

> Alas! how are we utterly ruined! our land is apportioned!
> Alas! how our captors do mock! our land is divided!

In both reconstructions the *Kînāh* verse (see on Amos v, 1–3) is used, which is very appropriate in this connection.

With verse 5 the difficulties increase. That in verse 6 the prophet takes up the words of some one else and bases his words upon this utterance is beyond doubt; but who pronounces the curse in verse 5? Some consider the verse a continuation of verses 3, 4. There loss of property and deportation are threatened; but, it is said, the prophets always look forward to a restoration, and this was in the mind of Micah when he uttered verse 5; he means to say that when the restoration becomes a reality the ungodly will have no part in the redistribution of the land. Others insist that there is no thought of a restoration in this verse; hence they refer the threat to the immediate future; the ungodly are to have no longer any part in the inheritance of Jehovah, because their families will be cut off in the impending judgment. The singular "thou" is thought to be used in order to indicate that every individual sinner is to be punished; not one will escape the threatened judgment. The first interpretation is perfectly possible, the second is highly improbable, because the context makes no distinction be-

tween the fate of the good and the bad at the time of the judgment. In verses 3, 4 the threat is made against the *whole* people; it will be *utterly* ruined, the enemy will take possession of the *entire* land, *everybody* is expected to go into exile. In the exile some will remain loyal to Jehovah, others will apostatize. Between the two classes a separation will be made at the time of the restoration; only the faithful will return to their former home. In this restored community, which is the congregation of Jehovah, the ungodly will have no part.

Others, who insist that the only reference to a restoration in this chapter is in verses 12, 13, give a still different interpretation. They consider verse 5 the utterance of a bystander who, as the spokesman of the people, attempts to interrupt the denunciatory discourse of Micah. To a great majority of the people the words of verse 4 would seem blasphemy. How could a man dare to announce that Jehovah was weaker than the gods of the Assyrians, that he could not or would not protect his chosen people; that the sanctuary would be desecrated? A man who uttered words such as Micah dared to utter must be a blasphemer or a madman; in either case he deserved the wrath of God. These thoughts a bystander put into words. "Because of his blasphemous words, the Jews think, Micah should be killed (compare Jer. xxvi, 8, 9, 11), destroyed with his entire family (Jer. xi, 19), so that his possessions would fall into the hands of strangers (Amos vii, 17); he should suffer the punishment of the false prophet (Deut. xiii, 9), and with him will suffer his descendants (Jer. xxii, 30), who are rooted out before they see the light. The form of this threat corresponds with the prophet's prediction; he is to suffer the very fate which he threatens them, lose permanently his inheritance." The most recent commentators, Nowack and Marti, consider verse 5 a later gloss. If the verse is original the choice lies between the first and the third interpretations, and of these the third seems to be, on the whole, the most satisfactory.

6. Attempts to silence the prophets were not infrequent; undoubtedly Micah's patience was tried many times by those who resented his teaching. But he cannot be silenced; he flings back the prohibition and makes it the starting point for new denunciations. If verse 5 contains the utterance of a bystander, "Prophesy not," in verse 6 may be understood as a summary of the prohibition implied in the threat there. The new condemnation falls chiefly upon the faithless religious teachers.

The text of 6ff. is in many places obscure; frequently the translation is doubtful, and there is much uncertainty as to where the objections which Micah takes up end, and where his own condemnations begin. G. A. Smith includes verses 6, 7 in the objection, and he renders the two verses as follows:

> Prate not, they prate, let none prate
> of such things!
> Revilings will never cease!
> O thou that speakest thus to the
> house of Jacob,
> Is the spirit of Jehovah cut short?
> Or are such his doings?
> Shall not his words mean well with
> him that walketh uprightly?

This differs considerably from the translations found in A. V. and R. V., but it requires only very slight alterations in the present Hebrew text. Of the two English translations that of R. V. is certainly superior to that of A. V. That even the Revisers found it difficult to understand the present text is shown by the numerous marginal readings.

If Smith's reproduction of the original is accepted as correct, the meaning of the two verses becomes clear. The people or the false prophets insist that Micah discontinue his foolish talk, his eternal revilings. Everyone can see that his statements are absurd. Does he mean to say that Jehovah will cast off his people? Has he ceased to

6 [4] [5] [1]Prophesy ye not, *say they to them that* prophesy: they shall not prophesy to them, *that* they shall not take shame.

[4] Or, *Prophesy not* as *they prophesy.* —[5] Heb. *Drop*, etc., Ezek. 21. 2.

7 O *thou that art* named the house of Jacob, is the spirit of the LORD [6]straitened? *are* these his doings? do not my words do good to him

[1] Isa. 30. 10; Amos 2. 12; 7. 16.—[6] Or, *shortened?*

be long-suffering? Is this the method of God's dealings with his chosen people? This last question forms the basis of the prophet's reply. He admits the truth implied in the question, but he points out in 8ff. that they are mistaken in their estimate of themselves. They are not upright; on the contrary, in every possible manner have they set aside the will of Jehovah; hence, according to their own reasoning, they can expect no favor from him. **Prophesy**—Literally, *drop*, that is, words (see on Amos vii, 16). Here the word is used in an unfavorable sense, equivalent to "grumble," "find fault." In the following clause "the prophet flings the same word back at them sarcastically." In this case the verb is in the frequentative tense, "they prophesy (or, *prate*) continually." **To them**—If the above interpretation is correct a better rendering would be "of these things" (so R. V. margin). The prophet is told to let alone politics and social conditions—the politicians will look after these things; he is to confine himself to the preaching of the "simple gospel." In the last clause of verse 6 the above translation reproduces the Hebrew more accurately; the words are those of the prophet's opponents, who are weary of listening to his grumbling. The opening words of verse 7 have proved a puzzle to all commentators, and practically all favor emendations. Smith alters the words so that they may be understood as an address to Micah, introducing several questions which are intended to show the absurdity of his attitude. **Straitened**—Or, *impatient;* literally, *shortened.* Has Jehovah ceased to be long-suffering? **These**—The things described in verses 3, 4. **Mean well**—God can send no message of judgment to those who serve him faithfully.

A second interpretation divides the sentences of verses 6, 7 between the prophet and his opponents. "Prophesy ye not" is assigned to the opposition, "thus they prophesy" are thought to be the words of Micah, introducing the preceding quotation. To this attempt to silence him the prophet replies with two rhetorical questions: (1) "Shall one not preach to these?"—that is, to such as are described in verses 1, 2; they certainly deserve the condemnation. (2) "Shall not reproaches depart?" Is it not time for the reproaches heaped upon the prophet to come to an end? In verse 7 the prophet is thought to introduce an additional objection raised to his preaching: "Shall it be said, O house of Jacob," or "by the house of Jacob." These are understood to be the words of the prophet, introducing the objection itself, which is expressed in two questions: (1) "Is the spirit of Jehovah shortened?" The prophet's words seemed to imply that Jehovah has ceased to be long-suffering; this accusation against Jehovah the objectors indignantly deny. (2) "Are these his doings?" The forsaking of his people, as announced in verses 3, 4. This also they are unwilling to believe. To these objections the prophet replies, introducing Jehovah himself as the speaker, by asking a question which points out, by implication, that he is not blaspheming Jehovah, but that they, by their own conduct, have made it impossible for Jehovah to show them any favor. The objections raised by the people indicated that they had failed completely to understand the ethical character of Jehovah and of his government. Like Amos,

that walketh [7]uprightly? 8 Even [8]of late my people is risen up as an enemy: ye pull off the robe [8]with the garment from them that pass

[7] Heb. *upright?*——[8] Heb. *yesterday.*

by securely as men averse from war. 9 The [10]women of my people have ye cast out from their pleasant houses; from their children have ye

[9] Heb. *over against a garment.*——[10] Or, *wives.*

Micah is compelled to show that Jehovah cannot save Israel simply because they are his chosen people; they must maintain the proper attitude of heart and life if they would enjoy his goodness (vi, 8). Their shortcomings and failures are further described in verses 8, 9. In view of this condition of things there is left no doubt that the denunciation of verses 3, 4 is perfectly justified, hence the sentence is repeated in verse 10.

These are the two most important interpretations of verses 6, 7; others need not be mentioned. The force of the verses remains essentially the same with either. The second follows more closely the present Hebrew text, but it is by no means certain that the latter has come down to us in its original purity; it may have suffered in the course of transmission.

Verses 8, 9 contain a picture of the corruption and oppression found on every hand. **Of late**—Literally, *yesterday.* This is certainly not equivalent to "long ago," but points to the recent past. The prosperity growing out of the efficient reign of Uzziah was largely responsible for the corruption that met the prophet's eye (see pp. 357ff.). **My people**—This expression is used sometimes of the whole people, sometimes primarily of the poor and needy who suffer oppression and whose only defender is Jehovah (Isa. iii, 12, 15). A comparison of verse 8 with verse 9 shows that in the former the reference is primarily to the oppressing nobles, in the latter to the oppressed poor. **As an enemy**—The nobles prove themselves enemies of Jehovah, whose property is to have mercy, by the cruel treatment they accord to the poor and needy, who are under the special care of Jehovah (Exod. xxii, 21ff.; Deut. xxvii, 19). **Pass by securely . . . averse from war**—They pounce upon their victims without provocation; as they pass by peaceably, attending to their own business, they fall upon them. **Pull off the robe with the garment**—R. V., "strip the robe from off the garment." A very obscure clause; A. V. evidently means that they take both the robe and the garment, though it may be difficult to distinguish between the two pieces of clothing named. The accusation clearly implies highway robbery; there may also be an allusion to the crime condemned in Amos ii, 8. However, it is practically impossible to justify the translation of A. V.; R. V. is more accurate, but what does it mean to "strip the robe from off the garment"? The difficulty is generally recognized, and various emendations have been proposed, affecting also other parts of verse 8. With a few changes, justified in part by LXX., verse 8 might be read, "But ye are the foes of my people, rising against those who are peaceful; the garment ye strip from them that pass by quietly, averse to war."

9. **Women**—The prophet has in mind widows, who, being without defenders, fall an easy prey to the greedy nobles; they are driven from their possessions. **Their children**—Who were unable to defend themselves. **Have ye taken away my glory forever**—This glory was their citizenship in the nation of Jehovah. When they were sold as slaves they were cut off from the nation, and thus they lost a privilege and glory belonging to them. Special care for the fatherless and the widows is enjoined in Exod. xxii, 22; Deut. xxvii, 19; compare Isa. i, 17; and the neglect of this duty is condemned again and again by the prophets (compare Isa. i, 23; x, 2).

Wellhausen and others propose a

taken away my glory for ever. **10** Arise ye, and depart; for this *is* not *your* [m]rest: because it is [n]polluted, it shall destroy *you*, even with a sore destruction. **11** If a man

[m] Deut. 12. 9.——[n] Lev. 18. 25, 28; Jer. 3. 2.

slight alteration of the text, which, though not necessary, emphasizes even more the heartless cruelty. They change "from their pleasant houses" into "from their pleasant children"; literally, *from the children of their pleasure.* This would add the thought that they tear the mother from the children by selling them to different masters.

10. In the face of such outrages mercy and long-suffering are out of place; judgment must be executed, and in verse 10 the sentence contained in verses 3, 4 is reiterated; the guilty ones must be cut off from their pleasant homes and cast into exile. **Arise ye, and depart**—Their punishment will be according to the *lex talionis;* they have sold others into slavery, now they must suffer a similar fate. **Your rest**—R. V., "resting place." "Rest was one of the chief aspects under which Canaan was regarded" (Deut. xii, 9), but it cannot be a resting place for such as are not on good terms with the owner of the land, Jehovah. As the text reads at present, the rest of the verse states why the land can no longer be a resting place for them. As a result of the defilement the land will "vomit out its inhabitants." A better rendering is that of R. V., "because of uncleanness that destroyeth, even with a grievous destruction"; an even better translation would be, "because of uncleanness that brings destruction, even grievous destruction." LXX., however, suggests a different reading, which may be original. It separates 10b more completely from 10a, and reads the former, "because of uncleanness ye shall be destroyed with a grievous destruction."

11. In verses 6, 7 the listeners had expressed their unwillingness to accept

11 [o]walking in the spirit and falsehood do lie, *saying,* I will prophesy unto thee of wine and of strong drink; he shall even be the prophet of this people.

11 Or, *walk with the wind, and lie falsely.* ——[o] Ezek. 13. 3.

the kind of preaching Micah was giving them. The opposition did not silence the prophet, it only stimulated him to new efforts; he pointed out that the present demanded the message he was delivering, and reiterated the announcement of judgment. Verse 11 presents the close of the threat; in it the prophet gives a description of the kind of prophet the people would like to hear, one who has always a message of peace and prosperity, and who at all times heaps flattery upon the self-righteous sinners. **In the spirit and falsehood**—R. V., "in a spirit of falsehood." A. V. gives a literal rendering of the original, except that before "spirit" the definite article should not be used. But "a spirit," standing by itself, is not equivalent to "a false spirit," and the context makes it impossible to think of the Spirit of God. Hence it is better to follow R. V. margin and read "in wind and falsehood." "Wind" is a picture of the vain and worthless things after which such a false prophet chases; "falsehood" has reference to the purpose for which he delivers his message; he purposes to deceive the people in order that he may serve his own personal interests. **Lie**—In seeking to deliver an acceptable message, he announces peace and prosperity when the message of Jehovah is one of calamity and judgment. **Wine and . . . strong drink**—To be understood in a wider sense of all "earthly blessings and sensual enjoyments." This is what they like, and the prophet knows that any man who preaches such a gospel will be received with open arms.

Return of a purified remnant, 12, 13.

Verses 12, 13 transpose us abruptly from the present corruption, facing imminent doom, to the distant future,

12 [p]I will surely assemble, O Jacob, all of thee; I will surely gather the remnant of Israel; I will put them together [q]as the sheep of Bozrah, as the flock in the midst of their fold: [r]they shall make great noise by reason of *the multitude of* men. 13 The breaker is come up before them: they have broken up, and have passed through the gate, and are gone out by it: and [s]their king shall pass before them, [t]and the LORD on the head of them.

[p] Chap. 4. 6, 7.—[q] Jer. 31. 10.—[r] Ezek. 36. 37.—[s] Hos. 3. 5.—[t] Isa. 52. 12.

when a remnant of the people carried into exile (3, 4) will be restored. On the surface the transition from verse 11 to verse 12 appears abrupt, but there is a real logical connection between the two verses. The people are ready to turn to a prophet who will promise pleasant things. This Micah cannot do; nevertheless his message is not one of unmitigated doom; he too has salvation to proclaim, though not for the immediate future or for all. Judgment, distress is all he sees ahead of him; all will be banished from the land. In exile the corrupt will be annihilated, but the loyal remnant, purified through suffering, will be assembled again by Jehovah; he himself will redeem it and restore it to its old home. **Jacob, . . . Israel**—Seem to be identical in meaning, denoting the whole nation; similarly "all" and "remnant" appear to be synonymous. The thought is one found in other prophetic utterances, that at the time of the restoration the present distinction between north and south will be obliterated, that the call will be extended to the whole nation, but that only a remnant will respond (Ezek. xxxiv, 11–14). This remnant will be numerous, however, and noisy like a flock of sheep. **As the sheep of Bozrah**—If the text is correct the "sheep of Bozrah" must be regarded as a popular saying like "kine of Bashan" (Amos iv, 1), alluding to Bozrah's wealth in sheep (see on Amos i, 12). The suggestion that a Moabite city is meant here rather than the Edomite Bozrah has little in its favor. LXX. suggests a different translation; it read the same consonants that are contained in the Hebrew word for Bozrah, but evidently it took these consonants as representing two elements, the preposition "in" and the noun "affliction." "In affliction" is not suitable here; still the reading of LXX. may indicate that "Bozrah" is not the original. The parallel line would lead one to expect here an expression similar to "in the midst of their fold." There is a modern Arabic word meaning "sheepstall," containing the same consonants as the word "affliction" but different vowels, which is applied to the place in which the sheep are kept during the night to protect them against wild beasts. The corresponding Hebrew word may be intended here; the erroneous vocalization being due to the Masorites, who were more familiar with the proper noun Bozrah than with the common noun. With this change the sentence may be read, "I will put them together as sheep in the sheepfold," that they may be safe from all enemies **Great noise**—Their numbers will be great; hence the noise made by them will be loud.

The gathering will take place before the actual deliverance; united, the remnant will be strong enough to overcome all obstacles and return to its old home. **The breaker**—The one who breaks down the obstacles and opens the way. If the picture of the flock is continued the expression is best understood as denoting the shepherd who opens the gate to let the sheep pass through; if, as is not impossible, the figure changes to that of an army it denotes the captain who is to lead the host in triumph from exile. In either case the term is of Messianic import (see on Hos. i, 11). **Through the gate**—The land of exile is likened, in the one case, to a sheepfold; in the other, to a prison house. Through the gates the remnant will march in

triumph on its way home. **Broken up** ["broken forth"] . . . **passed through** . . . **gone out**—"The three verbs . . . describe in a pictorial manner progress which cannot be stopped by any human power" **Their king**—Before the returning host will go their king, Jehovah, as at the time of the Exodus (Exod. xiii, 21; compare Isa. lii, 12); Jehovah is not identical with the "breaker."

The connection of verses 12, 13 with verse 11 is not very close; the leap into the future appears to be abrupt. This abruptness is responsible for a great deal of discussion concerning these two verses. Some have held that the words were spoken not by Micah, but by the false prophets. This view is shown to be improbable by the following considerations: (1) The restoration of a remnant implies a carrying into exile, but the latter is the very thing the false prophets deny. (2) In verse 12 Jehovah is the speaker—"*I* will assemble." Would Micah introduce Jehovah as speaking through the prophets whom he condemns so severely? (3) The prophecy is a true prophecy; it is one which in essence is found in all the prophetic books (compare iv, 6). It is not likely that Micah would put a *true* prophecy into the mouth of a *false* prophet. Others consider the verses exilic or postexilic, and thus a later addition to the oracles of Micah. "They presuppose the exile and dispersion" (Wellhausen). However, it is by no means certain that the exile is presupposed as an actual fact. All the prophets seem to have penetrated the darkness of the present and the immediate future and to have seen, in a more distant era, a ray of light and glory. The modern tendency, which treats as later exilic or postexilic interpolations all passages in preëxilic prophecies which promise a restoration, does not appear to be well founded (see pp. 35f.). It seems almost unthinkable that the prophets, with their lofty conception of Jehovah, should leave the nation in the despair of exile. If the existence of preexilic prophecies pointing to a restoration is granted, the only objection remaining against these verses is the looseness of connection with their context This looseness of connection has led some to think that, while the words may be Micah's, they are not in their original position. "The entire context leads me to expect after verse 11 a return to and repetition of the threat of punishment, and there can be no question that the contrast between ii, 11, and iii, 1, is greatly weakened by these two verses. To deny them to Micah we have no reason, but it is possible that they may have been transposed from another context. Their original place might have been after iv, 8, preparing the way for chapter v, but separated from it by iv, 9–14, which verses look back to the present." The only support, then, for this view is the seeming abruptness with which the prophet passes from denunciation to promise, and the interruption in thought between ii, 11, and iii, 1. The latter objection vanishes if chapter iii is taken as the beginning of a new section rather than as a continuation of chapter ii (see p. 384); the first loses much of its force if logical connection can be established between ii, 11, and ii, 12, 13. The existence of such connection has already been pointed out in the beginning of the comments on verses 12, 13, and it seems close enough to warrant the belief that the verses are from Micah and that they are in their original place. It is not even necessary to suppose that the fall of Samaria occurred between the time when ii, 11, was uttered and the time when ii, 12, 13, was spoken; the prophet simply looks beyond the exile announced in ii, 3, 4.

CHAPTER III.

CONTRAST BETWEEN THE PRESENT-DEGRADATION AND THE FUTURE EXALTATION, iii, 1–v, 15.

If the above conclusion concerning ii, 12, 13, is correct, chapter iii cannot

CHAPTER III.

AND I said, Hear, I pray you, O heads of Jacob, and ye princes of the house of Israel; [a]*Is it* not for you to know judgment? 2 Who hate the good, and love the evil; who pluck off their skin from off them, and their flesh from off their bones; 3 Who also [b]eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skin from off them; and they break their bones, and chop them in pieces, as for the pot, and [c]as flesh within the caldron. 4 Then [d]shall they cry unto the LORD, but he will not hear them: he will even hide his face

[a] Jer. 5. 4, 5.—[b] Psa. 14. 4.—[c] Ezek. 11. 3, 7.

[d] Psa. 18. 41; Prov. 1. 28; Isa. 1. 15; Ezek. 8. 18; Zech. 7. 13.

be the continuation of chapter ii; "And I said" (iii, 1) does by no means prove it to be such continuation, as Keil seems to think. Chapter iii, 1, is the beginning of a new section, including chapters iii–v. The opening words of the address, "Hear, I pray you," as compared with i, 2, and vi, 1, are in favor of this view. The line of reasoning in these chapters is similar to that in chapters i, ii. The section opens with a vivid description of the present corruption, of the civil rulers (iii, 1–4), and of the religious leaders (5–11), hence the doom of the city is sealed (12). Dark, indeed, and hopeless the present appears to be, but it will not remain thus forever. In chapters iv, v the prophet paints in brightest colors the glories of the Messianic age, to be enjoyed by a redeemed remnant.

Outrages committed by civil rulers, 1–4.

The denunciation in iii, 1–4, is addressed to the nobles, called "heads" and "princes" or "magistrates" (compare Isa. i, 10). They are reminded, by means of a rhetorical question, that it is their duty to know the principles of righteousness and equity; ignorance of these does not excuse their unrighteous conduct. **Jacob, . . . Israel**—These are synonymous expressions, which, in the light of verse 10, must refer to Judah (verse 9; but compare ii, 12). Samaria may have fallen before these words were uttered, so that Judah had become the sole representative of Israel. **Know judgment**—R. V., "justice," or equity. In view of the special privileges enjoyed by Israel (Amos ii, 11; Hos. xi, 1–4; Isa. i, 2) there was no reasonable excuse for ignorance concerning the principles of righteousness on the part of anyone, certainly not on the part of the leaders of the people.

Their conduct is so different from what one might expect. **Hate the good**—Wrongdoing has become their second nature (Amos iii, 10); their disposition has become utterly perverted, so that they hate that which they should love and love that which they should hate (compare Isa. i, 16, 17). This corruption expresses itself in appalling cruelties. 2b, 3 describe in the strongest language possible the cruelties of the nobles. They flay the poor people alive, tear the flesh from their bones; they break their bones (others, "they lay bare their bones"), chop them in pieces, boil them in the caldron, and devour them. It is hardly necessary to state that the expressions are not to be understood literally as implying cannibalism; they are vivid pictures of heartless cruelty and oppression. Similar expressions are found in Isa. iii, 15, "What mean ye that ye crush my people and grind the faces of the poor?" and Amos ii, 7 (Jerome), "Who crush the heads of the poor upon the dust of the earth." For the simple "as for the pot" LXX. reads "as flesh for the pot," which furnishes a suitable parallel to the next clause.

4. Such criminals Jehovah will forsake in the hour of judgment. **Not hear**—They will cry unto him for deliverance, but he will leave them to their terrible fate. As they would not heed the cry of the oppressed, so Jehovah will not heed them. **Hide his face**—In anger (compare Hos. v, 15).

from them at that time, as they have behaved themselves ill in their doings.

5 Thus saith the LORD [e]concerning the prophets that make my people err, that [f]bite with their teeth, and cry, Peace; and [g]he that putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him. 6 [h]Therefore night *shall be* unto you, [1]that ye shall not have a vision; and it shall be dark unto you, [2]that ye shall not divine; [i]and the sun shall go down over the prophets, and the day shall be dark over them. 7 Then shall the seers be ashamed, and the diviners confounded: yea, they shall all cover their [3]lips; [k]for *there is* no answer of God.

[e] Isa. 56. 10, 11; Ezek. 13. 10; 22. 25.—[f] Chap. 2. 11; Matt. 7. 15.—[g] Ezek. 13. 18, 19.—[h] Isa. 8. 20, 22; Ezek. 13. 23; Zech. 13. 4.—[1] Heb. *from a vision.*—[2] Heb. *from divining.*—[i] Amos 8. 9.—[3] Heb. *upper lip.*—[k] Psa. 74. 9; Amos 8. 11.

Then . . . at that time—The context leaves no doubt that these words refer to the time of judgment. Cheyne says, "We must suppose that, when Micah delivered this prophecy (of which we can have but a summary), he introduced between verses 3 and 4 a description of the 'day of Jehovah,' the day of just retribution." That we have but a summary of the prophet's message is probably true, but it is not so certain that a description of the day of Jehovah, or even a specific reference to it, was needed; the people would comprehend the prophet's meaning without it (compare the use of "now" in Amos vi, 7; Hos. ii, 10).

Condemnation of the mercenary prophets, 5–8.

5. Micah considers the mercenary prophets largely responsible for the moral and spiritual decline of the nation. **Make my people err**—They lead the people astray by preaching the divine favor and peace, when their message should have been one of repentance and judgment. 5b sets forth the motives determining the character of their message. **That bite with their teeth, and cry, Peace**—If they receive something to eat, or, in a more general sense, if by doing so they can serve their own interests, they announce, without regard for the truth, peace, that is, something that will please the hearers. The rough expression "bite with their teeth," instead of the simple "eat," is in perfect harmony with the strong language of verses 2, 3. **He that putteth not into their mouths**—He who fails to purchase their favor. **Prepare war**—Woe to such a one; for him they have only unpleasant things; unto him they declare the wrath of Jehovah and all sorts of calamity (see on Joel iii, 9). "The satisfying or non-satisfying of their stomach determined the character of their prophecy."

Verses 6, 7 are addressed directly to the mercenary prophets, not to the "heads" of the nation. **Night . . . dark**—Figures of calamity and distress. At such time the advice of a prophet is most needed, but they will have no advice to give. **Sun . . . day**—The "sun" of prosperity will set and the "day" of judgment, which is "darkness and not light" (Amos v, 18), will dawn. **Have a vision . . . divine**—At present the mercenary prophets may claim that they receive their message in the same manner as the "true" prophets, but in the day of calamity a difference will be seen, for they will have no message with which to encourage their grief-stricken countrymen. The reason for the silence is stated in verse 7. **Seers . . . diviners**—Synonymous terms denoting the mercenary prophets, the second calling attention to the illegitimacy of their pursuit. **Ashamed, . . . confounded**—Also synonyms. They will "stand ashamed, because their own former prophecies are proved by calamity to be lies, and fresh, true prophecies fail them, because God gives no answer." **Cover their lips**—Literally, *beard.* They will no longer venture to speak. The phrase means covering the face up to the nose, which is a sign of humiliation, shame, and mourning (Lev. xiii,

8 But truly I am full of power by
the spirit of the LORD, and of judg-
ment, and of might, [l]to declare unto
Jacob his transgression, and to Is-
rael his sin. 9 Hear this, I pray
you, ye heads of the house of Jacob,

[l] Isa. 58. 1.——[m] Jer. 22. 13.——[n] Ezek. 22. 27; Hab. 2. 12; Zeph. 3. 3.——[4] Heb.

45; Ezek. xxiv, 17). For a study of the phenomenon of "false" prophecy in Israel see Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible*, iv, pp. 116ff. All that needs to be said here is that there were two distinct classes of false prophets: (1) The *mercenary* prophets, who are condemned here for their insincerity; (2) the *political* prophets, who may have been sincere, but who lost sight of the religious mission and destiny of the nation, and whose prophecies were determined entirely by political ambitions.

In verse 8 Micah contrasts himself with the mercenary prophets. **Spirit**—He is animated by a higher spiritual force than they; he is under the influence of the Divine Spirit (see on Joel ii, 28). **Power**—Authority, strength, and courage to withstand the popular clamor. **Judgment**—A keen moral sense that enables him to see what is right and true; he does not call evil good or black white (compare Isa. v, 20). **Might**—Manliness, courage. He remains unmoved by flattery or threat, by gain or loss; he stands firmly for what he considers right and true. Hence he does and forever will, in spite of false prophets, fearlessly expose sin and apostasy.

Some commentators are inclined to omit "by the spirit" as a later gloss, on account of its peculiar position in the sentence and its grammatical construction. There may be good reason for this omission, but this would not affect the thought of the verse, since the virtues named are, in other passages, traced to the influence of the Divine Spirit (see on Joel ii, 28; compare Isa. xi, 2).

Renewed condemnation of the nation's religious and political leaders—Doom of Jerusalem, 9–12.

and princes of the house of Israel,
that abhor judgment, and pervert
all equity. 10 [m]They build up Zion
with [n] [4]blood, and Jerusalem with
iniquity. 11 [o]The heads thereof
judge for reward, and [p]the priests

bloods.——[o] Isa. 1. 23; Ezek. 22. 12; Hos. 4. 18; chap. 7. 3.——[p] Jer. 6. 13.

After the direct denunciation of the prophets Micah sums up the sins and crimes which may be laid to the charge of nobles, priests, and prophets, and announces the utter destruction of Jerusalem.

Verses 9, 10 are addressed exclusively to the "heads" and "princes" (R. V., "rulers") of the nation, whose duty it was to administer justice. It is worthy of notice that not one word is said in condemnation of the king. This silence concerning the king may be due to the fact that the prophecy was uttered at a time when a king in sympathy with the prophetic teaching was upon the throne, namely, Hezekiah (compare Jer. xxvi, 17–19; 2 Kings xviii, 3, 4). The "heads," instead of administering justice, abhorred and perverted it. How they did this is stated in verse 11. The capital owed its splendor and magnificence very largely to the crimes condemned in verse 9. **Blood**—Bloodguiltiness (Isa. i, 15; compare G.-K., 124n) that is, "violent conduct leading to the ruin of others." By extortion and other illegitimate means they secured the material needed for the erection of palaces and other majestic structures. The last clause repeats the same thought for the sake of emphasis. Verse 11 contrasts the conduct of the rulers, priests, and prophets with their religious professions; and so it contains a summary of all the accusations uttered in the preceding verses, and paves the way for the announcement of doom in verse 12. **Reward**—Better, *bribe*. All the eighth century prophets find it necessary to preach against corruption of this sort (see on Amos v, 12; compare Isa. i, 23; Mic. vii, 3). **The priests . . . teach for hire**—It was the duty of

thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: [q]yet will they lean upon the LORD, [5]and say, *Is* not the LORD among us? none evil can come upon us.

[q] Isa. 48. 2; Jer. 7. 4; Rom. 2. 17.—[5] Heb. *saying.*

12 Therefore shall Zion for your sake be [r]plowed *as* a field, [s]and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and [t]the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest.

[r] Jer. 26. 18; chap. 1. 6.—[s] Psa. 79. 1.—[t] Chap. 4. 2.

the priests to teach the *Torah* (see on Hos. iv, 4ff., especially verse 6) and to give judgment in difficult legal cases; this they were to do uninfluenced by any personal consideration (Deut. xvii, 11); but in time the priests became unfaithful, and the question of reward played an important part in the discharge of their duties. **Divine for money**—See on verse 5.

Lean upon Jehovah—In the face of this moral depravity rulers, priests, and prophets claimed to be entitled to the favor and protection of Jehovah. **Is not Jehovah among us?**—In their opinion the prophet of judgment was a fanatic, a fool; they were convinced that, since Jehovah was on their side, no evil could befall them (see introductory remarks to Amos iii, 1–iv, 3; iii, 2; v, 14). The mass of people might, perhaps, be excused for laboring under a misapprehension, but not so the leaders; they should have known that Jehovah demands holiness of heart and life rather than a painstaking ritual service.

12. The inevitable results of such criminal folly must be severe judgment. **Zion . . . Jerusalem . . . mountain of the house**—The three names might denote three distinct sections of the capital: Zion, the southeast spur of Mount Ophel, the ancient Jebusite stronghold, including the royal palaces; the mountain of the house, the temple area; Jerusalem, the city proper; or they might be understood as synonymous expressions, each denoting the entire city, the three expressions being used to make possible the use of several verbs; such usage would emphasize the completeness of the destruction. Whichever of these two interpretations one may accept, there can be no doubt that the prophet means to foretell the utter destruction of Jerusalem. It will fall into ruin and will be plowed like a field; even the temple mount will be forsaken and will be turned into jungle. Concerning the fulfillment of this prophecy Stanley says: "The destruction which was then threatened has never been completely fulfilled. Part of the southeast portion of the city has for several centuries been arable land, but the rest has always been within the walls. In the Maccabean wars (1 Macc. iv, 38) the temple courts were overgrown with shrubs, but this has never been the case since." With this prophecy compare Isa. xxxii, 13, 14. The utterance of Micah is quoted in Jer. xxvi, 18, in defense of Jeremiah, who was accused of blasphemy because he predicted a similar destruction of Jerusalem.

CHAPTER IV.

The Messianic Outlook, iv, 1–v, 15.

Chapter iii pictures the present corruption, chapters iv, v the glory to be enjoyed by the remnant after its redemption from the calamity announced briefly in iii, 12, and alluded to several times in the two chapters. To emphasize this contrast is undoubtedly one purpose of the present arrangement of the three chapters. It should not be supposed, however, that the three chapters form one connected whole, or that the pictures in iv, v were all drawn at one and the same time. The abrupt transitions and loose connections within the chapters make it certain that they contain rather a collection of short oracles, all dealing with the same subject, but not coming from the same period of the prophet's activity, and describing the Messianic age from various points of view.

CHAPTER IV.

BUT [a]in the last days it shall come to pass, *that* the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. 2 And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

3 And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into [b]plowshares, and their spears into [1]pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against

[a] Isa. 2. 2, etc.; Ezek. 17. 22, 23.

[b] Isa. 2. 4; Joel 3. 10.——[1] Or, *scythes.*

Zion the center of the universal religion of the future, 1–5.

These five verses furnish the first sublime picture of the glory of the Messianic era. **1. In the last days**—Better, R. V., "latter days"; literally, *sequel of days.* "Last" days is ambiguous; the prophet does not mean to point to the end of the world, or to the end of the Jewish dispensation, but to some indefinite future. The phrase is used by the prophets only in referring to the Messianic age. **The mountain of the house of Jehovah**—The temple mount. **In the top**—Better, *at the head.* The meaning is not, "Zion will be so exalted above all the mountains and hills that it will appear to be founded upon the top of the mountains," but rather that it will be at the head of the procession, towering above all others. By some this phrase has been taken literally, as if the prophet expected that, at some future time, the temple mount would in reality become the highest mountain, and Ezek. xl, 2, and Zech. xiv, 10, have been quoted in favor of this interpretation. On the other hand, Psa. lxviii, 15, 16, shows that to the Hebrew the physical elevation of the temple site was not a necessary element of its preëminence as a sanctuary, and it is better to interpret the words figuratively as meaning that the fame of Jehovah will become so great that it will eclipse that of all other deities. The metaphor may be based upon an ancient belief that there was a mountain reaching from earth to heaven, on whose summit the gods dwelt. **People shall flow unto it**—Even outside nations will come to recognize Jehovah as the true God and Jerusalem as his earthly dwelling place; hence they will flock to Jerusalem in great numbers and will exhort others to come, that they may receive instruction in the principles of true religion. **2. Law**—Parallel with "word." Not "law" in the technical sense, but in the general sense of instruction (so R. V. margin). This instruction Jehovah gives through his servants, the prophets and priests (see on Hos. iv, 6). **Zion**—As the holy city was the religious center of Israel, so the prophet expects it to be the center of the universal religion during the Messianic era, the city in which Jehovah will dwell and from which all his activities will proceed **Of his ways**—The "ways" of Jehovah denote the principles of ethics and religion laid down by Jehovah; of these he will teach the nations as the needs or circumstances of each may demand.

3 When Jehovah will be thus recognized as the Lord of all, an era of permanent world peace will set in. **Judge**—Better, *arbitrate.* **Rebuke**—Better, R. V., "decide concerning." Difficult international disputes, which at other times would have caused war will be decided by Jehovah. With such an arbiter war will disappear; then the implements of warfare will be needed no longer, and they will be turned into implements of agriculture; and in time the art of warfare will be entirely forgotten (compare Joel iii, 10). 4 In that blessed era the people of Jehovah will be allowed to enjoy

nation, [c]neither shall they learn war any more. 4 [d]But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make *them* afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken *it*. 5 For [e]all people will walk every one in the name of his god, and [f]we will walk in the name of the LORD our God for ever and ever. 6 In that

[c] Psa. 72. 7.—[d] 1 Kings 4. 25; Zech. 3. 10.

[e] Jer. 2. 11.—[f] Zech. 10. 12.

undisturbed the blessings of peace; no enemies will be there to make them afraid. For the expression "they shall sit . . . ," describing a condition of peaceful felicity, compare 1 Kings iv, 25; 2 Kings xviii, 31. In the course of time the words may have become a proverbial saying (see on Joel i, 12). To dispel any doubt that might arise concerning the fulfillment of the glorious promise the prophet seals it by adding the solemn formula, "The mouth of Jehovah of hosts hath spoken it" (Isa. i, 20).

The exact meaning of verse 5 and its connection with the preceding verses is somewhat uncertain. Perhaps it is best, following Isa. ii, 5, to interpret it as containing an exhortation to the listeners to do their share toward a realization of the promised felicity. The enjoyment of the glory described in verses 1–4 is still a matter of expectation; the other nations are joined to their idols, and there is no move on their part to turn to Jehovah; even Israel is hopelessly corrupt (iii, 1ff.). Hence, the prophet continues, if the ideal is to be realized it is high time to make a beginning, and this beginning must be made by the chosen people; Israel must turn to its God and live in harmony with his will. **Walk in the name**—"The *name* of God is that side of his nature which can be revealed to man; and to walk in his name means to live in mystic union with God as he has revealed himself, and under his protection" (see on Amos ii, 7). To walk in the names of false deities must be understood similarly. **Forever and ever**—The union is not to be broken again (see on Hos. ii, 19, 20). If the above interpretation of verse 5 is correct a better rendering would be, "Since (at present) all the peoples walk every one in the name of his god, therefore we will (or, *let us*) walk (the more resolutely) in the name of Jehovah our God forever and ever."

To sum up, the chief features of the Messianic age emphasized in this passage are: 1. Zion will be recognized as the seat of Jehovah's universal dominion. 2. The spread of the true religion will be accomplished not by the force of arms but through the moral influence going out from Zion. 3. There is to be no external world power; the nations will retain political independence; Jehovah, not Israel, will rule the world. 4. War will come to an end; international disputes will be settled by arbitration, Jehovah himself being the arbiter.

A few remarks concerning the fulfillment of this and similar prophecies may be in order in this connection. The hope expressed in this passage is not yet fulfilled; literally it will probably never be fulfilled; in spirit and essence it will reach its fulfillment, according to the universal Christian belief, when the Spirit of God or the Spirit of Jesus comes to be the dynamic of individual and national life and conduct everywhere. For a clear understanding of the details of the prediction and its fulfillment the following facts should be borne in mind: The prophets had a sublime conception of the character of Jehovah, and it is this conception which enabled them to apprehend, in a measure at least, the ultimate purposes of Jehovah for mankind; they were convinced that the character of the age in which man would permit God to have his own way must correspond to the character of the God whom they knew. But the glimpses and visions of the future did not remove the prophets from their present,

and it is but natural that in their thoughts concerning the *manner* (not the *fact*) in which God would carry out his purposes they should be influenced by the circumstances of their present. For example, when the words found in Mic. iv, 1–5, were spoken, Israel was the chosen nation in which "all the nations of the earth should be blessed"; Jerusalem was the earthly dwelling place of Jehovah. The author looked upon Israel as a "servant" with a sublime mission, and he was sure that the nation would have an important part in the working out of the divine plan of redemption. That there ever could come a time when not even a remnant would be ready and qualified to carry out the divine commission, does not seem to have suggested itself to the minds of the prophets; and yet it follows naturally from their teaching, and it is a legitimate inference from the conditional character of all prophecy, that, if at some future time, through its own fault, the nation should prove itself incapable of carrying to completion its mission, some other "servant" must take its place, if God still desires to carry out his original purpose. The later history of Israel shows that through disobedience it cut itself off, as a nation, from God and from its place in his plan of redemption. As a result its place became vacated, and another "servant" had to be found. This other "servant," Christians believe, was Jesus the Christ. With the cutting off of Israel the promises based upon the assumption that the nation would prove faithful became of no effect. Hence all elements of Messianic prediction connected with the nation Israel, such as the final exaltation of the nation, the permanence and unique place of Zion, and others, should be eliminated from all *Christian* expectations concerning the nature and character of the true kingdom of God.

The recurrence of these verses (with the exception of verse 4, and with verse 5 in a different form) in Isa. ii, 2–5, raises a literary question concerning the relation of the two passages to one another. If a dependence is recognized at all one of four explanations must be accepted: (1) Isaiah is dependent upon Micah; (2) Micah is dependent upon Isaiah; (3) both are dependent upon an earlier prophet; (4) it is a late passage, inserted in both books at a time subsequent to the eighth century B. C. "The passage was very possibly written and inserted in Micah after the exile, and copied from Micah by one of the editors of Isaiah" (Cheyne). Since only internal evidence is available, absolute certainty cannot be expected. Against (1) it has been urged that Micah was a younger contemporary of Isaiah, and that the former's ministry did not begin until some time after the discourses embodied in Isa. ii–iv had been delivered (that is, the reign of Jotham, see pp. 361ff.). Hence, in order to establish the dependence of the earlier upon the later, it must be assumed that Isa. ii, 2–5, was borrowed from Micah and inserted in its present place some time after the other prophecies in that section (chapters ii–iv) had been spoken. In opposition to (2) it has been pointed out that in Micah the passage appears to be imbedded more closely in its context, while in Isaiah the connection is exceedingly loose; and this fact has been thought by some to prove that its original place is in Micah. For a long time (3) was generally regarded as the most satisfactory explanation. According to this view the utterance of an older unknown prophet was adopted by Isaiah as well as by Micah as a "classic" description of the ideal kingdom of God to which the prophets of Jehovah looked forward. The fact that in both books the passage begins with "and" has been thought to favor the idea that the prediction was torn from its original context. Most recent commentators favor (4), that in both books the verses are a later interpolation. This view is closely bound up

day, saith the LORD, [g]will I assemble her that halteth, [h]and I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted; 7 And I will make her that halted [i]a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation: and the LORD [k]shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever.

8 And thou, O tower of [2]the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jeru-

[g] Ezek. 34. 16; Zeph. 3. 19.—[h] Psa. 147. 2; Ezek. 34. 13; 37. 21.—[i] Chaps. 2. 12; 5. 3, 7, 8; 7. 18.

[k] Isa. 9. 6; 24. 23; Dan. 7. 14, 27; Luke 1. 33; Rev. 11. 15.—[2] Or, *Edar;* Gen. 35. 21.

with the claim that all Messianic hopes have their origin in the exilic or postexilic period (see p. 215). The possibility of such interpolation cannot be denied, but certainly there is nothing in the passage itself to compel one to consider it a late product. On the whole, (3) offers the most satisfactory explanation.

Restoration and healing of the dispersed —Revival of the kingdom of David, 6–8.

6. When the era of Messianic peace dawns the dispersed of Israel will share in its glory; Jehovah will bring back all whom in his anger he cast out. A similar promise is found in ii, 12, 13, only in the present passage is added a new thought, the restoration of health, physical and moral, to the dispersed. R. V. reads instead of "her that halteth . . . ," "that which is lame, . . . that which is driven away, . . . that which I have afflicted," which is preferable in English, though the Hebrew has the feminine form. All three expressions are pictures of the judgment suffered in consequence of sin. The affliction has been severe and the outcasts are near unto death, but Jehovah will revive them. 7. **A remnant**—The nucleus of a new kingdom of God (see on Amos v, 15). The Messianic hopes all center around this remnant and the nation growing out of it. The lame and afflicted to whom the prophet promises restoration are such as have remained faithful in the face of affliction; these Jehovah will deliver from their affliction and constitute the "remnant," and with it he will make a new beginning in his attempt to redeem the world. **A strong nation**—In time, under the divine providence, the insignificant remnant will develop into a strong and powerful nation. **Jehovah shall reign**—In the past incompetent and faithless rulers were responsible for much of the corruption and distress of the people; the new nation will not suffer from such leaders, for Jehovah himself will be the king, and his dominion will continue forever.

The center of the new kingdom will be Zion (see on verses 1–5). With the promises made in verses 6, 7 fulfilled, the former royal splendor and prestige will be restored. The new promise is expressed in verse 8, addressed directly to Jerusalem. **Tower of the flock**—This does not allude to a tower (R. V., "of Eder") near Beth-lehem (compare Gen. xxxv, 21), nor to a tower of the king's castle (Neh. iii, 25), but denotes Jerusalem itself. Now it is a flourishing city, but soon it will be destroyed, and upon its ruins will be erected a watchtower, like those built for the better protection of the flocks roaming around the desert (2 Chron. xxvi, 10). Already the prophet beholds the city in its reduced condition, and he selects the figure of the tower to make his address more forceful (compare Isa. xxix, 1; Jer. xxi, 13). **Stronghold** ["hill"] **of the daughter of Zion**—In apposition to the preceding expression, also denoting the city of Jerusalem. *Ophel* is the name of the southeast spur of the temple mount, bounded on the east by the Kidron, on the west by the Tyropœon valley, but here, as in other places (for example, 2 Kings v, 24), the word is a common noun, meaning "hill." **The first** ["former"]

salem. 9 Now why dost thou cry out aloud? [l]*is there* no king in thee? is thy counsellor perished? for [m]pangs have taken thee as a woman in travail. 10 Be in pain, and labor to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail: for now shalt thou go forth out of the city, and thou shalt dwell in the field, and thou shalt go *even* to Baby-

[l] Jer. 8. 19.

[m] Isa. 13. 8; 21. 3; Jer. 30. 6; 50. 43.

dominion—The dominion enjoyed during the most flourishing period of Hebrew history, under David and Solomon, will be restored to Jerusalem during the Messianic era. The last clause, which is considered by some a late marginal gloss introduced into the text by accident, expresses the same thought.

Distress and subsequent redemption, 9, 10.

The distant future, the prophet is convinced, will be all brightness and glory, but in the immediate future he can see nothing but gloom and despair. This new section opens with a vision of the agony and despair soon to be felt by the people. The prophet already beholds the destruction and hears the lamentation. **Why dost thou cry out aloud?**—Addressed is the "daughter of Zion" (verse 10), that is, Jerusalem and its inhabitants. The capital is filled with lamentation over the present or rapidly approaching judgment. **A woman in travail**—This and similar expressions are used not infrequently in the Old Testament, as expressive of extreme pain and anguish. The questions of verse 9 are meant to be more or less ironical. The prophet knows well enough the reason for the lamentation and the helplessness of king and nobles in such a crisis. **King . . . counselor**—There is a king and there are counselors; but in the time of calamity, when they are needed the most, they can do nothing, because one greater than they has caused the distress (see on Hos. xiii, 10). **Be in pain . . .**—Jerusalem may well continue the lamentation, for there can be no immediate relief; and the wail is justified, because the city is desolate; homeless and without protection the inhabitants will camp in the fields, until finally they are carried away into exile. Only after these calamities have been suffered will Jehovah manifest his redemptive powers. The *tertium comparationis* in the picture is only the pain and anguish; there is no thought of Zion actually bringing forth a child, that is, the Messianic king.

If verses 9, 10 were standing by themselves their interpretation would be a very simple matter; but when they are studied with due regard for their context difficulties seem to arise. Verses 11, 12 picture the enemy gathered around Jerusalem, determined to defile and to destroy the holy city; but the scheme will not succeed; the enemy will be "beaten to pieces," and Jerusalem will triumph gloriously; and all this will happen without a capture of the city or an exile. Such outlook seems to be in hopeless contradiction with the statements in verse 10, which imply a conquest and an exile, and promise deliverance only after the people have been deported to Babylon. To remove this difficulty the words "and shall come even unto Babylon" are commonly rejected as a later interpolation. But the omission of these words by no means removes the whole difficulty, for the fate foretold in verse 10 still remains very different from that announced in verse 11; in the former there is an expectation of great affliction and suffering, in the latter all is triumph and glory. A more satisfactory solution of the difficulty, and one that requires no textual changes, is to separate verses 9, 10 entirely from verses 11ff., and to consider the oracles as two distinct utterances coming from entirely different periods of Micah's ministry. At one time,

lon; there shalt thou be delivered; there the LORD shall redeem thee from the hand of thine enemies.

11 [n]Now also many nations are gathered against thee, that say, Let her be defiled, and let our eye [o]look upon Zion. 12 But they know not [p]the thoughts of the LORD, neither understand they his counsel: for he shall gather them [q]as the sheaves

[n] Lam. 2. 16.—[o] Obad. 12; chap. 7. 10.

[p] Isa. 55. 8; Rom. 11. 33.—[q] Isa. 21. 10.

near the fall of Samaria, he expected that Judah, including Jerusalem, would suffer the same fate as Israel (i, 8ff.; iii, 12), but it is not necessary to suppose that he adhered to this view throughout his entire ministry. It is at least possible that in his later years he was influenced by the conviction of his greater contemporary Isaiah that Jerusalem was inviolable (Isa. xxxvii, 33ff.). That conviction is reflected in 11ff., verses which fit admirably in the period of Sennacherib's invasion in 701 B. C. (compare Isa. xxxvi, xxxvii); verses 9, 10 would reflect the earlier conviction, expressed so forcibly in chapter i. These words, then, may have been spoken either before or, better, soon after the fall of Samaria, while that calamity was still fresh in the memory of the prophet, or, perhaps, as late as 711 B. C. (compare Isa. xx), when Sargon sent an expedition against Philistia. The mention of Babylon does not militate against the view that Micah is the author of the words, for the reference does not imply that at the time the words were spoken Babylon had already displaced Assyria as the great Eastern world power. Babylon is mentioned simply as a place to which the people would be deported. According to 2 Kings xvii, 24, Sargon settled in the territory of Israel men from Babylon, and this statement is corroborated by Sargon's own inscription (*Records of the Past*, vii, 29). It is only natural to suppose—and this would be in perfect accord with Assyrian practice—that the depleted territory in the east was filled with exiles from the land of Israel. If this was done we can readily understand how Micah, who expected the people of the south to suffer a fate similar to that of the north, might represent the people of Jerusalem as following their brethren from Samaria to the same place of exile.

Deliverance of Jerusalem; destruction of the enemy, 11–13.

This picture, like the preceding, starts from the present calamity and ends with a promise of complete victory. For the differences between the two pictures see comments on verse 10. **Now**—Calls attention to the present condition in contrast with the future glory. **Many nations**—If, as suggested above (on verse 10), this oracle comes from the period of Sennacherib's invasion, this expression must refer to the Assyrians, whose armies might be called "many nations," since they were made up of soldiers from many vassal states (compare Isa. x, 8, "Are not my princes all of them kings?"). **Thee**—Jerusalem. **Defiled**—The hostile armies were determined to enter and destroy the holy city, but their very presence there would be, from the standpoint of the devout Jew, a defilement of the city (see on Joel iii, 17). All their attempts will be futile, for the thoughts of the enemy are not the thoughts of Jehovah (compare Isa. vii, 5–7). **Gather them as the sheaves**—The cruel treatment of a conquered foe is often likened to the threshing of sheaves (Amos i, 3; 2 Sam. xii, 31). The enemies have come for conquest, but the prophet declares that they have been permitted to gather around the holy city only to make possible a glorious triumph of the chosen people **Floor**—See on Joel ii, 24.

Verse 13 is an exhortation to the inhabitants of Zion to execute judgment upon the arrogant enemies.

into the floor. 13 [r]Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion: for I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass: and thou shalt [s]beat in pieces many people: [t]and I will consecrate their gain unto the LORD, and their substance unto [u]the Lord of the whole earth.

[r] Isa. 41. 15, 16; Jer. 51. 33.—[s] Dan. 2. 44.

Thresh—The picture of verse 12 is continued; the inhabitants of Zion are likened to the animals whose duty it is to tread out the grain with their hoofs (see on Amos i, 3; Hos. x, 11; Deut xxv, 4). **Hoofs brass**—The harder the hoofs the more effective the treading. **Make thine horns iron**—This introduces a new figure. With the powerful horns it will pierce and cast down the foe (Deut. xxxiii, 17). Thus equipped, Jerusalem will have no difficulty in overthrowing the "many nations," before the latter can do any harm (compare Isa. x, 33, 34). **I will consecrate**—The Hebrew verb form should be understood as an unusual form of the second person, and should be rendered "and thou shalt consecrate." This reading is supported by nearly all the ancient versions. Israel is not to enrich itself by plundering the defeated foe; all the possessions taken from him are to be consecrated to Jehovah's use (Lev. xxvii, 28; 1 Sam. xv, 21; 1 Kings xx, 42). **Gain . . . substance**—The two nouns are synonyms and are equivalent to "the sum and substance of their possessions." **The Lord of the whole earth**—As such he is able to help Judah to victory, and as such he has a claim upon the spoil.

CHAPTER V.

THE MESSIAH AND THE MESSIANIC ERA, 1–15 (in Hebrew, iv, 14–v, 14).

In v, 1, the prophet returns once more (iv, 9, 11) to the condition now present or imminent; but immediately he rises from the troublesome present to the glorious future (iv, 10,

CHAPTER V.

NOW gather thyself in troops, O daughter of troops: he hath

[t] Isa. 18. 7; 23. 18; 60. 6, 9.—[u] Zech. 4. 14; 6. 5.

13), which he describes in v, 2ff., with a fullness and grandeur not seen anywhere else in the book. The historical background is probably the same as that presupposed in iv, 11–13, the invasion of Sennacherib. If so, chapter v presents the outlook of Micah at the time in which Isaiah uttered the remarkable Messianic prediction in xi, 1ff.

The Hebrew of verse 1 contains two plays upon words: the first between "gather in troops" and "daughter of troops," the second between "judge" and "rod." **Gather thyself in troops, O daughter of troops**—A very peculiar expression, which has been variously interpreted. If the text is correct, which is not beyond doubt, the following seems to be the most satisfactory interpretation: Jerusalem is called "daughter of troops" because wherever the prophet looks he sees people with anxious faces crowding together in terror. The troops of warriors who were accustomed to boast in their strength have turned into troops of cowards. These cowards he exhorts ironically to keep on crowding together (Jer. v, 7), and well they may, for the enemy has encircled the city; escape is impossible, they must prepare for the worst. **They shall smite**—If this is the proper translation the verse implies that the enemies' efforts will be crowned with success. Then the oracle cannot be assigned to the same period as iv, 11–13. But the tense should probably be understood as a frequentative imperfect (G.-K., 107e or g), and should be translated "they smite" or, even better, "they have smitten," again and again, and they are doing it now by laying siege to the holy city. **Smite**

laid siege against us: they shall [a]smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek. 2 But thou, [b]Bethlehem Ephratah, *though* thou be

[a] Lam. 3. 30; Mat. 5. 39; 27. 30.

[b] Matt. 2. 6; John 7. 42.

. . . with a rod upon the cheek—Smiting upon the cheek is a gross insult, and the expression may be used—so here—in the general sense "to insult" (Job xvi, 10; 1 Kings xxii, 24). The complaint of the prophet is that the enemies have been and still are insulting the representative of Jehovah ruling in Jerusalem. **Judge**—Equivalent to *king* (see Amos ii, 3); "judge" is used here because of the similarity in sound of the original with the word translated "rod." "Judge of Israel" is equivalent to "king of Judah." 5b may contain a direct reference to the insults heaped upon Hezekiah hy the representatives of Sennacherib (Isa. xxxvi, 37; compare x, 7ff.). The distress and suffering of the present are indeed great, but they will not continue forever; before the city can be taken deliverance will come.

The Messiah's birth and reign, 2–4.

Closely connected with the deliverance will be the appearance of the Messianic king, though it is not stated or implied that he will accomplish it. Chapter iv contains four separate Messianic sections, but in v, 2, the prophet introduces for the first time the person of the Messianic king; and he does so in the form of an apostrophe to Beth-lehem. The new king is to be of the dynasty of David and is to be born in the ancient home of David. With this promise should be compared iv, 7, where Jehovah announces that he himself will rule over the restored remnant; but in spite of this essential difference there is a connection between the promise in v, 2ff., and that of iv, 6–8. In iv, 8, it is promised that the dominion shall return to Zion; v, 2, introduces the person who is to rule in Zion as Jehovah's representative. **Beth-lehem Ephratah**—The second more accurately with R. V., "Ephrathah"; LXX. reads, "And thou, Beth-lehem, house of Ephrathah," which is thought by some to be an erroneous combination of two originally distinct readings, the one "And thou, Beth-lehem," the other "And thou, Beth-Ephrathah," and the same combination is thought to be reflected in the Hebrew phrase. Of the two names only one is thought to be original, but there is a difference of opinion as to which one; some thinking that it is " Beth-lehem," more that it is "Beth-Ephrathah." The other is thought to be an explanatory gloss, which at first was put in the margin, but in time was accidentally transferred into the text. Those who consider "Beth-Ephrathah" original think that "Beth-lehem" was added to explain the less common name; those who make "Beth-lehem" the original think that "Beth-Ephrathah" was added to distinguish this Beth-lehem from a city in the territory of Zebulun bearing the same name (Josh. xix, 15). If the two words represent an erroneous combination of two originally distinct names, one of these explanations may be correct; but what is there to prove that such a combination exists? Beth-lehem is the well-known home of David, about five miles south of Jerusalem (1 Sam. xx, 6). The other word, "Ephrathah," and its derivatives occur several times in the Old Testament in connection with Beth-lehem; but in the great majority of the cases Beth-lehem and Ephrathah are not, as is frequently assumed, synonymous; for the latter denotes the district in which the former is located (1 Sam. xvii, 12; Ruth i, 2; iv, 11; 1 Chron. ii, 50, etc.); only rarely do the two appear to be identical (Gen. xxxv, 16, 19). But if Ephrathah is the name of the district in which Beth-lehem is located, the combination found in the Hebrew text becomes perfectly natural—Beth-le-

little [c]among the [d]thousands of Judah, *yet* out of thee shall he come

[c] 1 Sam. 23. 23.—[d] Exod. 18. 25.—[e] Gen. 49. 10; Isa. 9. 6.

forth unto me *that is* to be [e]ruler in Israel; [f]whose goings forth *have been*

[f] Psa. 90. 2; Prov. 8. 22, 23; John 1. 1.

hem which is situated in the district of Ephrathah. Why the name of the district is added it may be impossible to determine; it may have been to distinguish this Beth-lehem from the one in Zebulun, or, as has been suggested, "to give greater solemnity to the address," or for purely rhythmical reasons. Whatever the reason, it certainly seems unnecessary to consider either name a later addition. **Though thou be little among the thousands of Judah**—R. V., "which art little to be among. . . ." The difference in translation does not affect the sense. The thought is not "which art *too* small," for that would require a different construction in Hebrew; besides, Beth-lehem was one "*among* the thousands" of Judah, though it was small and insignificant when compared with some other towns. "Thousands" is equivalent to "family" (Judg. vi, 15) in the broader, technical sense of "clan." Though Beth-lehem was an unimportant place among the clans of Judah, out of it is to come one who is destined to be a ruler in Israel. **Unto me**—In accord with my will, for the purpose of carrying it to completion. **Whose goings forth have been** ["are"] **from of old, from everlasting**—R. V. margin, "from ancient days." The last word does not mean *eternity* in the now commonly received sense of that word (see on Joel iii, 20). In Isa. lxiii, 9, the identical expression, translated "days of old," refers to the early history of Israel (compare vii, 20); in vii, 14, and Amos ix, 11, to the time of David. Hence it is precarious to interpret this passage as teaching the premundane existence of the Messiah. It is much more likely that the prophet is thinking here of the descent of the Messianic king from the dynasty of David, and that the words refer to David's day. Some think that the expression would not be used of a period less than three centuries in the past; hence they understand it of the patriarchal period, meaning that the pedigree of the Messianic king may be traced back to patriarchal times, even to Abraham. If Amos ix, 11, comes from Amos (see pp. 215ff.) the difficulty which is responsible for the last-mentioned view vanishes, for Amos is even earlier than Micah (compare also vii, 14). No difficulty is felt by those who assign the passage to the postexilic period, for by that time the interval elapsed had become sufficiently long to warrant the use of the term in referring to the time of David. All the interpretations mentioned thus far assume that "goings forth" is equivalent to "origin," and that the prophet is thinking of the genealogy of the promised king.

There are those, however, who hold that "goings forth" does not mean "origin," that the prophet is not thinking of the genealogy of the king, but that he has in mind the numerous manifestations of Jehovah in the nation's past history. If so, none of the above interpretations can be correct. These interpreters take as their starting point Isa. lxiii, 9. Jehovah had, in the very beginning, selected Israel for a sublime work. But all the prophets bewail Israel's stubbornness, and they represent Jehovah as interfering, again and again, either in his own person, or in the person of the "angel of Jehovah," or in some other manner, in order to prepare the nation for its lofty mission. Of such "goings forth" the prophets knew; therefore, these interpreters reason, it is quite probable that Micah intended to identify the appearance of the Messianic king with the "goings forth" of Jehovah in the past. "From time inconceivable," says Hoffmann, "the ruler who will finally proceed from

from of old, from [1]everlasting. 6 Therefore will he give them up, until the time *that* [g]she which travaileth hath brought forth: then [h]the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel.

[1] Heb. *the days of eternity.*

[g] Chap. 4. 10.—[h] Chap. 4. 7.

Beth-lehem has been going forth and coming; for, since it is he to whom tends the history of mankind, of Israel, of the Davidic house, all advances in the same (that is, all significant epochs in this history) are beginnings of his coming, are goings forth of the second son of Jesse." With a New Testament writer such an identification would be quite natural; not so with an eighth century prophet. On the whole, the view that sees here a reference to the Davidic descent of the Messianic king is most satisfactory.

The natural continuation of verse 2 is verse 4, where the activity of the Messianic king is described. Between the two verses stands one that seeks to explain the connection between the present calamity and the future exaltation. There may not be conclusive evidence for denying the verse to Micah, but there can be no doubt that it is out of place where it now stands, and it certainly has some marks of a later date. It should be removed from its present position for the following reasons: (1) Verse 4 is the continuation of verse 2; (2) the subject of "he will give up" (verse 3) must be Jehovah, but in verse 2 Jehovah speaks of himself in the first person, and in verse 4 the third person refers to the Messianic king; (3) v, 3, is dependent on iv, 10, but the author of v, 3, misunderstood iv, 10, by taking it too literally; (4) the reference to the "return," no matter how interpreted, is strange in this connection. **Therefore**—Because such great and blessed events are coming, the surrender of Israel to affliction can only be temporary. **Until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth**—That event will mark the end of the distress. Undoubtedly a reference to iv, 9, 10, where the distress of Jerusalem is likened to the anguish of a woman in travail. But iv, 10, contains no thought of Zion herself bringing forth a child, or being in the anguish of childbirth; that is a thought added by the author of this passage. Zion will bring forth; the child, the author says, is to be identified with the "ruler" of verse 2. There is no warrant for identifying "she which travaileth" with Mary, the mother of Jesus, as if this were a direct prediction of the birth of Jesus. It is not impossible that the author was acquainted with Isa. vii, 14.

The birth of the child will mark, on the one hand, the end of pain and distress; on the other, the dawn of peace and prosperity. **Then**—When the ruler is born. **Shall return**—This might mean that they shall return from exile, or that they shall return to Jehovah in obedience and love (compare Isa. x, 20, 21). The latter must be meant if verse 3 is in its original place, for the context knows nothing of an exile, but the language is in favor of the other interpretation (see below for a third meaning). **Remnant** ["residue"] **of his brethren**—Those in Zion who escape judgment. Since the ruler of Zion is the offspring of Zion, its inhabitants (see on Hos. ii, 2) are his brothers. **Unto the children of Israel**—If this is the right translation neither of the above interpretations of "shall return" can be correct; instead, 3b must be understood as promising a reunion of north and south (see on Hos. i, 11; compare Isa. xi, 13). R. V. margin suggests a different translation (compare Jer. iii, 18)—"with the children of Israel"; that is, the residue of Judah and the children of Israel shall return together, either in a spiritual sense or from the exile. Either translation gives good sense.

Verse 4 describes the activity of the new ruler, who is represented, in ac-

4 And he shall stand and [2] [i]feed in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God; and they shall abide: for now [k]shall he be great unto the ends of the earth. 5 And this *man* [l]shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land: and when he shall tread in our palaces, then shall we raise against him seven

[2] Or, *rule*.—[i] Isa. 40. 11; 49. 10; Ezek. 34. 23; chap. 7. 14.—[k] Psa. 72. 8; Isa. 52. 13; Zech. 9. 10; Luke 1. 32.

[l] Psa. 72. 7; Isa. 9. 6; Zech. 9. 10; Luke 2. 14; Eph. 2. 14.

cord with a common Semitic custom, as a shepherd shepherding his flock. **Stand**—Like a shepherd in the midst of his flock (Isa. lxi, 5). **Feed**—Not only provide nourishment, but in general "give a shepherd's care." **In the strength of Jehovah**—He will be endowed with strength from Jehovah, that he may defend his sheep against wolves and robbers (John x, 11, 12). **In the majesty of the name of Jehovah**—The *name* of Jehovah is Jehovah in manifestation (see on iv, 5; Amos ii, 7; compare A. B. Davidson, *The Theology of the Old Testament*, pp. 36ff.). The *majesty of the name of Jehovah* is the majesty or splendor in which Jehovah manifests himself upon earth. The same splendor will show itself in the activity of the divinely appointed ruler.

Under this shepherd's care the people will live in peace and felicity. **They**—The subjects. **Shall abide**—Equivalent to *shall abide in peace and safety;* no one can harm them (compare Hos. ii, 18; Isa. ix, 7; xi, 6–9). **Now**—Refers not to the time of speaking, but to the time when the shepherd will exercise his shepherding care. **Shall he be great unto the ends of the earth**—This may mean that his power and authority will extend over the whole earth, but in view of verse 5, which implies that some nations will rise up against his kingdom, it is better to understand it as meaning that his reputation will spread far and wide, so that other nations will hesitate to attack his people. If they should dare to do it he can easily overthrow them before they can do any harm.

The first sentence of verse 5 is a part of this section. **And this man shall be the peace**—The promised ruler will be peace personified; from him it will spread over the whole promised land, and ultimately the whole world will be benefited by it (Eph. ii, 14). The expression "comprehends in one pregnant and blissful word what the Messiah's coming signifies for his people and the world generally." There may be an allusion to "Prince of peace" (Isa. ix, 6), a part of a prophecy delivered in connection with the Syro-Ephraimitish crisis in 735–734.

Supremacy over Assyria, 5b, 6.

Ultimately war shall be no more (iv, 3), but hostility on the part of the foreign nations will not cease immediately upon the appearance of the Messianic king. However, when a hostile demonstration is made the people need not be afraid, for there will be a superabundance of leaders to ward off serious trouble. **Assyrian**—A defeat of Assyria is promised in iv, 12, 13, but it will not result in the destruction of the world power, which in time will renew its efforts to subdue the people of God. The outcome will be the same. **Into** (or, *against*) **our land**—Does not imply necessarily a crossing of the borders, simply an expedition for the purpose of invasion. **Tread in our palaces**—This does presuppose "domination over the holy land." It seems strange, however, that in one and the same breath the prophet should promise peace and safety for the flock (4, 5a) and, on the other hand, a victory of the Assyrians that will result in the occupancy of the palaces in the land of Israel. No wonder many commentators regard these verses not a part of the original, but an "afterthought." The difficulty vanishes if

shepherds, and eight [3]principal men.
6 And they shall [4]waste the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of [m]Nimrod [5]in the entrances thereof: thus shall he [n]deliver *us* from the Assyrian, when he cometh into our land, and when he treadeth within our borders. 7 And [o]the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people [p]as a dew from the LORD, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men.
8 And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles in the midst

[3] Heb. *princes of men.*——[4] Heb. *eat up.*——[m] Gen. 10. 8 10, 11.——[5] Or, *with her own naked swords.*——[n] Luke 1. 71.——[o] Verse 3.——[p] Deut. 32. 2; Psa. 72. 6; 110.3.

we follow LXX. and read "borders," which presupposes a Hebrew word very similar to the one translated "palaces." Then the whole sentence will read, "when he marches on our borders" (compare last sentence of verse 6), and, like the preceding, it refers to an attempted invasion. The attempt will fail, because the enemy will be met by brave heroes, who will drive him back. **Shepherds, . . . principal men**—The last literally, *princes among men.* These will be the leaders of the forces of the Messianic king. Their relation to the chief shepherd (verse 4) is not indicated; undoubtedly they are to be considered his subordinates (compare Isa. xxxii, 1). **Seven . . . eight**—A specimen of ascending enumeration (see on Amos i, 3). "Seven" signifies a perfect number, "eight" is added to indicate that there will be even more than enough leaders.

Under these leaders the enemy will be driven quickly from the borders, but they will not be satisfied to remain on the defensive; they will assume the offensive and invade the land of the enemy, Assyria. **Waste**—Literally, *feed off.* It will be left completely bare. **Land of Nimrod**—Though primarily a designation of the land of Babylonia (Gen. x, 10), it may be applied to Assyria, for "out of that land he (Nimrod) went forth into Assyria" (Gen. x, 11). Here may be the additional thought that the shepherds will penetrate Assyria even to the far distant Babylonia. Cheyne thinks that there is a "special significance in the phrase, for a Hebrew could hardly help connecting Nimrod with *māradh*, 'to rebel.'" **In the entrances thereof**—Literally, *in the gates thereof* (compare Nah. iii, 13). The parallelism requires an expression similar to "with the sword." Vulgate reads "with his lances"; A. V. margin, "with her own naked swords"; but in this rendering it is difficult to determine the antecedent of "her," and it is exceedingly doubtful that the Hebrew warrants the translation "naked swords." A very slight change would give "with drawn swords" (compare Psa. lv, 21, where the same word is used). For the latter part of verse 6 see on verse 5.

The restored nation's attitude toward other peoples, 7–9.

Verses 7–9 give another glimpse of the future. The prophet pictures two phases of the remnant's relation to others nations. To some it will dispense blessings and power, to others terror and destruction. The nations that are sensitive and submit to the moral and religious influences going forth from the remnant, will be refreshed and blessed; those who oppose the benign influences will be trodden down and torn (compare Isa. viii, 14; Luke ii, 34).

7, 8. **The remnant of Jacob**—See on verse 3. **Dew . . . showers**—The *tertium comparationis* is not "the mysterious origin of the dew and rain," or "the countless number of the dewdrops," but the refreshing and vitalizing power. "Israel will come upon many nations like a refreshing dew from Jehovah, which falls plentifully in drops upon the grass, and will produce and promote new and vigorous life among them" (compare iv, 1-3). **Tarrieth not . . . nor waiteth**

of many people as a lion among the beasts of the forest, as a young lion among the flocks of [6]sheep: who, if he go through, both treadeth down, and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver. 9 Thine hand shall be lifted up upon thine adversaries, and all thine enemies shall be cut off.

[6] Or, *goats*,

—The falling of the rain and dew is neither helped nor hindered by man, for the processes of nature go on while man slumbers; in the same way the vitalizing influences will proceed from the remnant no matter what the attitude of anyone. But this does not mean that the attitude of those involved has nothing to do with the participation or nonparticipation in these blessings. The destiny and mission of Israel cannot be affected by the hostility or friendship of the nations in whose midst it labors, but the destiny of these nations will be determined thereby. The friendly will be refreshed, but, verse 8 continues, the hostile will be devoured by the remnant, as beasts of the forest or sheep are devoured by a ferocious lion. **None can deliver** ["there is none to deliver"]—Nothing or no one can resist successfully the power of the remnant.

In verse 9 the prophet addresses a word of encouragement or blessing to the remnant marching forth to subdue its enemies. If this is the meaning of the verse, R. V. is to be preferred: "Let thine hand be lifted up above thine adversaries, and let all thine enemies be cut off." An even better rendering would be, "May . . . be lifted up, may . . be cut off," that is, May you be completely successful in the task appointed to you by Jehovah. "May thy hand be lifted up above" is equivalent to "mayest thou triumph over." Others interpret verse 9 as expressing the conviction of the prophet that the victory promised will surely be won. Then A. V. is to be preferred, "Thine hand shall indeed be lifted up."

10 [q]And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD, that I will cut off thy horses out of the midst of thee, and I will destroy thy chariots: 11 And I will cut off the cities of thy land, and throw down all thy strong holds: 12 And I will cut off witchcrafts out of thine hand; and

[q] Zech. 9. 10.

Jehovah's achievements on behalf of the redeemed remnant, 10-15.

10, 11. The passing away of human defenses. From the relation of the remnant to the nations without the prophet turns to the perfecting of the kingdom of God within. **In that day** —The day of triumph pictured in verses 8, 9. The wonderful experiences of the people will convince them that Jehovah is their real helper, not the chariots and horses in which they were putting their trust in Micah's day (compare Isa. ii, 7; xxx, 16; xxxi, 1); hence they will turn to him in confidence and faith. As a result all human defenses may be destroyed (compare Hos. viii, 14; Isa. ix, 4ff.; xi, 1ff.; Ezek. xxxviii, 11) Should any foreign nations dare to rise against the people of Jehovah, he himself will smite them.

12. Witchcrafts and soothsayers will be removed. **Witchcrafts**—That witchcrafts were practiced in Judah in Micah's age is stated also by Isaiah (ii, 6; viii, 19), but what was their precise nature cannot be determined, though necromancy seems to have played an important part (Isa. viii, 19). Some think that the expression "out of thine hand" limits the prophet's implied condemnation to such "arts" as were performed with the hand. However, this is doubtful, since "out of thine hand" is equivalent to "from you" (compare ii, 1, "in the power of their hand," equivalent to "in their power"; compare also Isa. i, 12). The term used here is a general term denoting black arts and practices of every sort. **Soothsayers**—This also is a general term, denoting the persons who practice

thou shalt have no *more* [r]soothsayers: **13** [s]Thy graven images also will I cut off, and thy [7]standing images out of the midst of thee; and thou shalt [t]no more worship the work of thine hands. **14** And I will pluck up thy groves out of the midst of thee: so will I destroy thy [8]cities. **15** And I will [u]execute vengeance in anger and fury upon the heathen, such as they have not heard.

[r] Isa. 2. 6.—[s] Zech. 13. 2.—[7] Or, *statues*.—[t] Isa. 2. 8.

[8] Or, *enemies*.—[u] Verse 8; Psa. 149. 7; 2 Thess. 1. 8.

the "witchcrafts" mentioned in 12a. The Hebrew word seems to be a derivative from a noun meaning "cloud"; hence it may denote primarily persons who professed to read a hidden meaning in the movements of the clouds.

13, 14. Idolatry also will come to an end. Of objects connected with the idolatrous cult three are mentioned: graven images, pillars, and the Asherim.

Graven images—Images made of stone (i, 7) or wood (Deut. vii, 5); sometimes the term appears to refer to images of the deity in general (Isa. xlii, 8). The attitude of the Old Testament toward these images is one of intense hostility (Hos. viii, 5, 6; x, 5; Deut. vii, 5, etc.). **Standing images**—Better, R. V., "pillars"; Heb. *maṣṣēbhāh*. The word is used almost exclusively of a "pillar" connected with the religious cult. It denotes the upright stone or pillar which seems to have been a regular accompaniment of Hebrew sanctuaries during the preëxilic period Its origin must probably be sought in an earlier stage of Semitic religion, when sacred stones were objects of worship, because it was thought that the deity inhabited the stones or was in some way attached to them. A crude, material symbolism of this sort would inevitably retard the progress toward the highest spiritual conception of the nature of Jehovah; hence the Book of Deuteronomy (vii, 5; xii, 3; xvi, 22) condemns these pillars mercilessly. The eighth century prophets were not quite so severe; in fact, Isaiah (xix, 19) seems to regard the pillar a legitimate element in Jehovah worship. **Groves**—Better, R. V., "Asherim." As the "pillar" points back to primitive stone worship, so the "Asherim" appear to be a relic of primitive tree worship. The Asherah (singular) was a representation of the sacred tree where a living tree was not available; the use of the plural implies the existence of whole groves of such sacred trees or of artificial poles. "From a survey of all the passages in which the word is used it appears that the Asherah was a post or a pole, planted in the ground, like an English Maypole, beside an altar, . . . and venerated as a sacred symbol" (Driver). Remnants of ancient tree worship are still seen in Palestine (compare Curtiss, *Primitive Semitic Religions Today*, pp. 90ff.). The Old Testament attitude toward the Asherim is one of hostility; there is no passage corresponding to Isa. xix, 19. **So will I destroy thy cities**—A similar threat is made in verse 11, where it is quite natural; not so here. Some suggest that the word should be rendered "adversaries" (margin, R. V. "enemies"), giving to it a meaning which it has in Aramaic, or to change one letter, which would give the corresponding Hebrew word. If this is done the expression would pave the way for verse 15. But one would expect rather another reference to idolatry; for this reason many change the word so as to read "thy idols" (compare 2 Chron. xxiv, 18, "the Asherim and the idols").

15. The prophecy closes with a threat of vengeance. **Vengeance**—The references to the divine vengeance must be understood like those to the divine jealousy (see on Joel ii, 18). The resentment of Jehovah is aroused by the hostile attitude of the nations toward the "remnant" so dear to him. The greater the hostility, the

intenser the resentment; the limit of his patience has now been reached, and he will blot out the enemies of his people forever. **Such as they have not heard**—The blow will be more terrible than anything they have ever experienced or heard. R. V. follows more closely the original in 15b and translates "the nations which hearkened not," that is, the nations which did not respond to the beneficent influence of the remnant (verse 8).

Chapter v does not reveal the same abrupt transitions that are seen in chapter iv. A break seems to occur between verse 9 and verse 10, and yet verses 10–15 are in a real sense a continuation of the description of the Messianic age; there certainly is nothing in them to militate seriously against the authorship of Micah. Hence, in discussing the fulfillment of the prophecy, the entire chapter may be considered as one piece, setting forth the birth and reign of the ideal king and the conditions resulting from his reign both within and without the nation. So far as the predictions concerning the *conditions* are concerned, the statements made in connection with iv, 1–5 (pp. 398ff.), may be repeated. They have not yet been fulfilled; literally they will probably never be fulfilled; in essence and spirit they will be fulfilled when the entire human race has had an opportunity to decide for or against Jesus the Messiah.

A few words need to be said, however, concerning the fulfillment of the more personal predictions, those pointing to the advent, place of birth, and reign of the Messianic king. That these predictions received their ultimate and highest fulfillment in Jesus is believed by all Christians. But this still leaves open the question whether the prophet, when uttering these words, actually had in mind the person, birth, and work of Jesus. The answer to this question must be determined by a careful interpretation of the utterances in the light of their contexts. If we take into consideration the statements concerning some of the things to be accomplished subsequent to the coming of the ideal ruler, it will be seen how difficult it is to maintain that the primary reference is to Jesus. Verses 5, 6, for example, make it clear that Micah expected the king to arise before the downfall of the Assyrian world power, and that one of the great achievements of his reign would be the deliverance from this long-time enemy. Micah was firmly convinced, as a result of his intimate communion and fellowship with Jehovah, that a deliverer, who would establish the kingdom of God upon earth, would come, and, like other prophets, he expected him to come from the dynasty of David; but his thoughts as to *when* he would come, *who* he would be, *where* he would be born, *how* he would work out his great purpose, were influenced by the course of events in his own day. All prophecy, Messianic prophecy included, was intended to have a profound significance for the prophets' contemporaries, and it is a convincing evidence of their close walk with God, or, in other words, of prophetic inspiration, that in the midst of darkness and apparent hopelessness these ancient saints should give utterance to such sublime expressions of faith. Micah may not have foreseen the Incarnation, but he did foresee the establishment of the kingdom of God upon earth; he may not have known the time when the salvation of the Lord would appear, but he knew that it would appear. Now Assyria might seem invincible, nevertheless Assyria must fall and Zion must triumph. Assyria did fall, but Zion did not triumph immediately; Chaldea took the place of the former, and oppression and distress continued. Many lost hope, but the prophets of God, in sublime faith, rose above the despair of the present and continued to revel in the glories of the future. Descendants of David sat upon the throne, some noble and true; around some of these centered anew the hopes

CHAPTER VI.

HEAR ye now what the LORD saith; Arise, contend thou [1]before the mountains, and let the hills hear thy voice. 2 [a]Hear ye, O mountains, [b]the LORD'S controversy, and ye strong foundations of the earth: for [c]the LORD hath a con-

[1] Or, *with.*——[a] Deut. 32. 1; Psa. 50. 1, 4; Isa. 1. 2.

[b] Hos. 12. 2.——[c] Isa. 1. 18; 5. 3, 4; 43. 26; Hos. 4. 1.

of the prophets, but not one met the expectations of the men of God until Jesus, the Christ, fulfilled them in a manner more sublime and spiritual than even the greatest of the prophets had hoped for. Thus, while primarily the prophecy in v, 2ff., does not refer to Jesus the Messiah, it does refer to *a* Messiah, and in the history of the past nineteen centuries Christians find complete justification for their belief that this and similar predictions found their fulfillment in the coming and work of Jesus the Christ.

The direct mention of Beth-lehem as the birthplace of the ideal ruler in no way affects this interpretation. The prophets expected the Messianic king to spring from the dynasty of David, and, in addition to this, they were convinced that in influence and power he would be a second David. For this reason Isaiah says "of the stock of Jesse" rather than "of the stock of David," and for the same reason Micah names as his birthplace Beth-lehem, the native town of David, rather than Jerusalem, where the successors of David were born. Such a promise would awaken memories of David, and would be suggestive of the character and splendor of his reign. A prediction similar in character is that in Isa. ix, 1ff., which promises special blessings to the territory north of the Plain of Esdraelon, because these districts had suffered most severely in the prophet's day, a prediction which received a new significance when Jesus proclaimed his gospel first in Galilee (Matt. iv, 13ff.).

CHAPTER VI.

JEHOVAH AND ISRAEL IN CONTROVERSY —THE ULTIMATE SETTLEMENT, vi, 1–vii, 20.

With vi, 1, begins a new series of utterances. The contents and arrangement are essentially the same as in the preceding sections, denunciation of sin, announcement of judgment, promise of the redemption and glorification of a remnant.

Jehovah's complaint, 1–8.

In these verses the prophet pictures, in dramatic form, a judicial contest between Jehovah and his people. Jehovah himself presents the accusation. He calls attention to the countless blessings bestowed upon the nation during its past history, and complains that his loving care has been met with basest ingratitude (1–5). Against this accusation the people seek to defend themselves by expressing their willingness to do anything to win the divine favor. If they have fallen short it is due to their ignorance of the real requirements of Jehovah (6, 7). To this plea the reply is made that ignorance is inexcusable, since the demands of Jehovah have been made known again and again (8).

1. **Hear ye**—The accused people. **Arise, contend**—The prophet acts as go-between. He summons the criminals to appear in court, hear the indictment, and plead their case. **Before the mountains, . . hills**—This is undoubtedly the meaning, but the original reads "with," and a slight alteration may be necessary. The controversy is to take place in the presence of the mountains and hills as the "abiding witnesses of all passing events from age to age."

2. **Hear ye, O mountains**—In verse 2 the prophet turns to the mountains to tell them what is coming, in order that they may know what is expected of them. **Strong ["enduring"] foundations of the earth**—Identical in meaning with "mountains" (compare Jonah ii, 6). They have endured for ages, and they

troversy with his people, and he will plead with Israel. 3 O my people, [d]what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me. 4 [e]For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of servants; and I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. 5 O my people, remember now what [f]Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from [g]Shittim unto Gilgal; that ye may

[d] Jer. 2. 5, 31.—[e] Exod. 12. 51; 14. 30; 20. 2; Deut. 4. 20; Amos 2. 10.—[f] Num. 22. 5; 23. 7; 24. 10, 11; Deut. 23. 4, 5; Josh. 24. 9, 10; Rev. 2. 14.—[g] Num. 25. 1; 33. 49; Josh. 4. 19; 5. 10.

have seen the manifestations of the divine mercy and of the people's ingratitude; therefore they may be summoned as competent witnesses. Because the Hebrew construction is peculiar and the word translated "strong" is used elsewhere only of perennial streams, some scholars suspect a corruption of the text. A very simple change would give the verb form "give ear," which would be a suitable parallel to "hear." In favor of the emendation is the fact that the two verbs are found together very frequently. If the change is made the appeal reads, "Hear, O ye mountains . . . give ear, ye foundations of the earth" (compare Isa. i, 2; Deut. xxxii, 1). **His people**—The pronoun is significant in this connection, suggesting, on the one hand, the right of Jehovah to call to account (compare Isa. iii, 13–15); on the other, the special privileges enjoyed by Israel (Amos iii, 12).

In verses 3–5 Jehovah presents the indictment. Israel has proved ungrateful, though one look into the past should have been sufficient to awaken an appreciative response to the divine mercy. The fact of ingratitude is not definitely stated, but is clearly implied in the complaint of Jehovah. His plea is truly pathetic, "full of holy earnestness and of heart-touching tenderness." **My people**—In spite of their ingratitude he recognizes them as his own. **What have I done . . . wearied**—Could they point to anything which God had done or left undone that could excuse their attitude toward him? He might have made them weary of serving him either by making excessive demands upon them (compare verses 6–8; Isa. xliii, 23) or by failing to keep the promises made to them (compare Jer. ii, 29). Jehovah knew that no fault could be found with him; for, far from making excessive demands, he had showered upon them blessings without number. Of these, verses 4, 5 enumerate three: the deliverance from Egypt, the guidance through the desert, the crossing of the Jordan in safety. **House of servants**—R. V., "of bondage," an expression frequently applied to Egypt (Exod. xiii, 3, 14; Deut. v, 6; Jer. xxxiv, 13). **I sent before thee**—To be thy leaders (Psa. lxxvii, 20) **Moses**—The prophet with whom Jehovah spake face to face (Num. xii, 8). **Aaron**—The spokesman of Moses, and thus also a mediator between Jehovah and the people (Exod. iv, 16). **Miriam**—The sister of the two, and the leader of the triumphal dance after the crossing of the Red Sea (Exod. xv, 20). The mere mention of the names, undoubtedly familiar to all, would awaken memories of wonderful manifestations of Jehovah on behalf of his people (compare also Amos ii, 9ff.). The second illustration is the frustration of Balak's plan to cut off Israel, which is recorded in Num. xxii–xxiv; Jehovah turned curses into blessings. **From Shittim unto Gilgal**—The grammatical connection of these words is somewhat obscure. However, R. V. is probably correct in rendering "remember from Shittim to Gilgal," and the thought is, "remember everything that happened from the time you left Shittim, the last station of the Israelites east of the Jordan, until you reached Gilgal, the first stopping place in Canaan." During this period

know [h]the righteousness of the LORD.

6 Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, *and* bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves [2]of a year old? 7 [i]Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, *or* with ten thousands of [k]rivers of oil? [l]shall I give my firstborn *for* my transgression, the fruit of my [3]body *for* the sin of my soul?

[h] Judg. 5. 11.—[2] Heb. *sons of a year?* —[i] Psa. 50. 9; 51. 16; Isa. 1. 11.—[k] Job 29. 6.—[l] 2 Kings 16. 3; 21. 6; 23. 10; Jer. 7. 31; 19. 5; Ezek. 23. 37.—[3] Heb. *belly.*

the most important event was the crossing of the Jordan, which is probably in the mind of the prophet. There seems to be insufficient reason for rejecting the words as a later gloss, or for supposing that some words have dropped out. **That ye may know the righteousness** ["righteous acts"] **of Jehovah**—They are to remember the events in their early history, for from them they may see that Jehovah has not been unfair but righteous, and that there is no cause for complaint; and this recognition should produce a grateful appreciation.

In verses 6, 7 the people are the speakers. They do not deny the truth of the accusation implied in verses 3–5; apparently they are ready to admit their shortcomings, but in self-defense they plead ignorance of the real requirements of Jehovah. If they only knew, they would be willing to take upon themselves the severest tasks, in order to atone for their guilt and to appease the divine wrath. **Wherewith shall I come . . . bow myself**—After listening to the severe arraignment they feel the need of prostrating themselves humbly before Jehovah, and of taking some steps to regain the divine favor. At a time when sacrifices played such an important part in the religious thinking of the people, it is only natural that they should think of these as the proper means by which to propitiate the offended deity. **Burnt offerings, . . . calves of a year old**—The two expressions belong closely together, burnt offerings consisting of calves a year old. On *burnt offerings* see comments on Hos. vi, 6. Calves a year old were commonly used for sacrificial purposes (Lev. ix, 3), though younger calves might be used.

If the ordinary offerings are not sufficient they are ready to present extraordinary gifts. **Thousands of rams, . . . ten thousands of rivers of oil**—The numbers are not to be understood literally; they signify great, unlimited numbers. "As sin assumes a thousand forms, far exceeding the limit of expiation by legal methods, the question arises, whether Jehovah's favor can be gained by greatly multiplied sacrifices, by thousands of rams or myriads of streams of oil." The ram was a common sacrificial animal. Oil, so far as we can learn from the description of the ritual in the Old Testament was not offered independently; but in connection with other offerings large quantities must have been consumed. It is possible that at an earlier period the use of oil played a more important part in the religious cult.

If this is insufficient they are ready to sacrifice their most precious possessions, even their own children. **Firstborn . . . fruit of my body**—Human sacrifice was practiced among Israel's neighbors (2 Kings iii, 27); the sacrifice of Isaac (Gen. xxii) and that of Jephthah's daughter (Judg. xi, 34ff.) may indicate that in the earliest times it was practiced even among the Hebrews without serious scruples, but at a later time the custom received the severest condemnation (2 Kings xvi, 3; xxi, 6; Jer. vii, 31; Ezek. xx, 26). Human sacrifice was offered only as a last resort, when everything else seemed to fail; and this is the thought here: if everything else fails they are willing to offer their own children; surely, such sacrifice should move Jehovah to compassion. **Transgression, . . . sin**—The two words, which are synonyms here, are used in the sense

8 He hath [m]showed thee, O man, what *is* good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but [n]to do justly, and to love mercy, and to [4]walk humbly with thy God?
9 The LORD'S voice crieth unto the city, and *[5]the man of* wisdom shall see thy name: hear ye

[m] Deut. 10. 12; 1 Sam. 19. 22; Hos. 6. 6; 12. 6.—[n] Gen. 18. 19; Isa. 1. 17.—

[4] Heb. *humble* thyself *to walk.*—[5] Or, *thy name shall see that which is.*

of "expiation of transgression, . . . of sin"; and the two questions, which are identical in meaning, might be rendered, "Shall I give my firstborn as an expiation of my transgression, the fruit of my body as an expiation of the sin of my soul?"

Verse 8 has been called "the greatest verse in the Old Testament." The questions in verses 6, 7 make it clear that the people did not understand the true character and requirements of Jehovah. They thought that the painstaking observance of the ceremonial and the perfunctory bringing of sacrifices constituted true religion. Their ignorance was, indeed, great, but it was inexcusable, for Jehovah had made known again and again what was acceptable in his sight (Amos v, 21ff.; Isa. i, 11–17; Hos. vi, 6). **He hath showed thee**—Through Moses, the prophets, the Nazirites, and other teachers (Amos ii, 11). **What is good**—A holy and righteous God can take pleasure only in that which is good, and this he requires of them. The essential elements of goodness are pointed out in a few words. **Do justly**—Live according to the principles of righteousness and equity (see on Amos v, 7). **Love mercy** ["kindness"]—Practice diligently the principles of kindness and brotherliness (see on Hos. ii, 19). This is a distinct advance over the preceding. Obedience to these two exhortations implies the keeping of the commandments in the second part of the Decalogue. The former of these is emphasized repeatedly by Amos (for example, v, 24), the latter by Hosea (for example, vi, 6). But Israel was doing the very opposite; on every hand was to be seen cruelty, injustice, oppression (ii, 1, 2, 8; iii, 2, 3, 9, etc.). Micah emphasizes a third requirement, which is a correlative of the majesty and holiness of Jehovah taught by Isaiah, and the proper observance of which meets the requirements in the first part of the Decalogue: **Walk humbly with thy God**—A humble walk with God is "a life of fellowship with God implying an identity of will and purpose, but fellowship conditioned by that spirit of humility which must ever govern the intercourse of weak and sinful man with a perfect and infinite God" (compare Deut. x, 12, 13).

In these few words is expressed more clearly than anywhere else in the eighth century prophecies the startling contrast between the popular religion and the religion of the prophets.

Indignant denunciation of prevalent crimes, 9–16.

Verse 9 is the introduction, summoning the listeners to pay earnest heed to the words about to be uttered. **Jehovah's voice**—It is not a fault-finding prophet, but Jehovah himself, who brings the accusation. **The city**—Jerusalem. **The man of wisdom shall see thy name**—Literally, *wisdom will see thy name.* If translated thus the meaning is obscure. Keil and others take "thy name" as subject and "wisdom" as object, and render, "Thy name sees wisdom," that is, has the true wisdom of life in view. On *name* see on v, 4. Even if the meaning "have in view" could be established for the verb "see" by passages like Gen. xx, 10, and Psa. lxvi, 18, this translation would be improbable, since the thought expressed is foreign to the context. It is much better to follow the ancient versions and read "fear" (compare R. V. margin) The result is "wisdom fears thy name," or, better, "let wisdom fear thy name," or even, "it is wisdom to fear thy name." Since the pronoun of the second person is peculiar in this

the rod, and who hath appointed it.

10 [6]Are there yet the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and the [7]scant measure [o]*that is* abominable? **11** [8]Shall I count *them* pure with [p]the wicked balances, and with the bag of deceitful weights? **12** For the rich men thereof are full of violence, and the inhabitants thereof have spoken lies, and [q]their tongue *is* deceitful in their mouth. **13** Therefore also will I [r]make *thee* sick in smiting thee, in making *thee*

[6] Or, Is there *yet unto every man an house of the wicked*, etc.—[7] Heb. *measure of leanness*, Amos 8. 5.—[o] Deut. 25. 13–16; Prov. 11. 1; 20. 10, 23.—[8] Or, *Shall I be pure with*, etc.—[p] Hos. 12. 7.—[q] Jer. 9. 3, 5, 6, 8.—[r] Lev. 26. 16; Psa. 107. 17, 18.

connection, it may be best to follow LXX. also in reading "his name." "When Jehovah's voice sounds so threatening and his rod is already buzzing near it is prudent to fear his name and to hear what is said in his name." Another meaning of the word translated "wisdom" is "safety," but the thought is not affected if it is substituted for the former. **Hear ye the rod**—The prophecy concerning the rod; the judgment about to fall. **Who hath appointed it**—Hear the voice of Him who has ordained the judgment, Jehovah. 9b is altered by many commentators on the basis of LXX. so as to read, "Hear ye, O tribe and council of the city."

The words of denunciation begin with verse 10. The causes of the judgment are stated first. This is done in the form of questions, which are to arouse the attention and the consciences of the hearers. The sins condemned are the same as those named by the other eighth century prophets. **Treasures of wickedness**—The exhortations and denunciations of the past have wrought no change for the better; the oppressors still continue their violence and robbery; they acquire treasures by wicked means, and thus they keep alive the wrath of Jehovah. **Scant measure**—Literally, *ephah of leanness*. They cheat the buyer by using small measures (see on Amos viii, 5; Hos. iii, 2; compare Deut. xxiv, 14, 15).

11. **Shall I count them pure**—This is an impossible rendering of the Hebrew, but it is supported by Vulgate; the Hebrew reads, "Shall I be pure?" If this is original, the people must be the speaker; but a change in speakers is out of place here. LXX. retains Jehovah as the speaker, and reads, "Can it (Jerusalem) be pure?" The LXX. and Vulgate readings require only slight alterations in the Hebrew, and either is preferable to the present text. **Wicked balances, . . . deceitful weights**—See on Amos viii, 5. No one who practices fraud or deceit can expect to be acquitted in the court of Jehovah.

Verse 12 continues the description of wrongdoing (compare Hos. iv, 1ff.). **Thereof**—Of Jerusalem. **Full of violence**—See on ii, 1, 2, 8; iii, 2, 3, 9. **Lies**—Toward God and man. **Deceitful**—Literally, *deceit*. The noun is used in the place of the adjective for the sake of emphasis (G.-K., 141c); the tongue does nothing but deceive.

Verses 13–15 announce the judgment. **Thee**—The masculine pronoun which is used in these verses cannot refer to the city. If the alteration suggested in connection with 9b is accepted the masculine pronoun may be explained as referring to "tribe," a masculine noun; otherwise we must suppose that the prophet uses the masculine form because he has in mind the people of the city rather than the city itself. **Smiting** ["have smitten"]—If the text is correct this is the so-called *prophetic* perfect. The punishment is still in the future, but it is so certain that the prophet describes it as already present. **I also**—Better, *I on my part*. **With a grievous wound**—An incurable wound (Nah. iii, 19). The construction of the Hebrew is somewhat unusual. A slight alteration, supported by LXX., would give, "therefore I on my part have begun to smite thee, to make thee desolate because of thy sins."

desolate because of thy sins. 14 [s]Thou shalt eat, but not be satisfied; and thy casting down *shall be* in the midst of thee; and thou shalt take hold, but shalt not deliver; and *that* which thou deliverest will I give up to the sword. 15 Thou shalt [t]sow, but thou shalt not reap; thou shalt tread the olives, but thou shalt not anoint thee with oil; and sweet wine, but shalt not drink wine.

16 For [v]the statutes of [w]Omri are

[s] Lev. 26. 26; Hos. 4. 10.—[t] Deut. 28. 38–40; Amos 5. 11; Zeph. 1. 13; Hag. 1. 6.—[v] Or, *he doth much keep the*, etc.—[w] 1 Kings 16. 25, 26.

Verses 14, 15 describe the judgment in greater detail; the prophet evidently thinks of a foreign nation as the divinely appointed executioner (Amos v, 11; Deut. xxviii, 39, 40). **Thou shalt eat, but not be satisfied**—The enemy will overrun the land and devastate it; as a result starvation will threaten the people. The meaning of the next clause is uncertain. **Thy casting down shall be in the midst of thee**—In the midst of the people. The word translated "casting down" (R. V., "humiliation") occurs only here; hence its exact meaning is more or less uncertain. Some give to it the meaning "emptiness," that is, of the stomach (so R. V. margin). With this translation the thought becomes clearer, for it would simply be a repetition of that expressed in the preceding clause; or else the second might be understood as a circumstantial clause, "Thou shalt eat but not be satisfied, while starvation shall be in the midst of thee." LXX., taking the word from a different root, renders "it will be dark." **Shalt take hold**—Better, R. V., "shalt put away." On the approach of the enemy they will hasten to hide their families and possessions, but the enemy will be too quick for them; they will not bring them to a place of safety; if, by chance, they should succeed in saving anything, it will fall into the hands of the enemy to be devoured by the sword (compare Isa. v, 29; Jer. l, 37). **Sow, . . . reap**—The enemy will consume or destroy also the growing crops in fields and vineyards. **Tread the olives**—See on Joel i, 10; ii, 24. Thomson says that, so far as he knows, olives are not trodden with the feet in modern times, "and it could only be done when the olives have been kept until they are very soft" (*The Land and the Book*, i, 524). Marti omits "thy casting down" and connects "in the midst of thee" differently; then he rearranges the clauses, and thus he secures what is undoubtedly a smoother reading. Following verse 13 he reads, "Whatever is in the midst of thee thou mayest put away, thou shalt not save it; and that which thou savest will I give up to the sword. Thou shalt eat but not be satisfied; thou shalt sow. . . . "

Verse 16 sums up the sin and punishment of the people. **The statutes of Omri are kept**—This is perhaps the best that can be done with the present Hebrew text, but the context and among the ancient versions LXX. and Peshitto suggest a slight change, so that it will read "thou didst keep," and this is probably the original. The reign of Omri, one of the greatest kings of the northern kingdom, is passed over very briefly in 1 Kings xvi, 21–28, but the statement is made that he dealt more wickedly than any king that went before him. The words of Micah are not to be understood as meaning that Omri actually made statutes enjoining wrongdoing, or that the people followed such statutes, but that they followed his example which exerted as much influence upon their conduct as written law could have done. "All the works of the house of Ahab" is similar in meaning to "statutes of Omri." Ahab was condemned by his great contemporary Elijah for two reasons: (1) He tolerated and even encouraged the worship of Baal (1 Kings xvi, 31, 32); (2) he oppressed the poor and robbed them of their ancestral holdings (1 Kings xxi). Micah has little to say about idolatry; it is rather oppression, violence, injustice, that he condemns. Hence "statutes

[x]kept, and all the works of the house of [y]Ahab, and ye walk in their counsels; that I should make thee [z]a [10]desolation, and the inhabitants thereof an hissing: therefore ye shall bear the [a]reproach of my people.

[x] Hos. 5. 11.——[y] 1 Kings 16. 30, etc.; 21. 25, 26; 2 Kings 21. 3.——[z] 1 Kings 9. 8; Jer. 19. 8.——[10] Or, *astonishment*.——[a] Isa.

of Omri" and "ways of the house of Ahab" are to be understood as referring not so much to religious apostasy as to the conduct of these kings illustrated in Ahab's dealings with Naboth. **Ye walk**—The change to the plural, here and in the last clause of the verse, is peculiar. If the plural is original it may be used to indicate that the individuals in the community are singled out and addressed personally; it is not impossible, however, that the change is due to the mistake of a copyist. **In their counsels**—As expressed in their conduct.

From the sin the prophet turns to the judgment. **That I should make**—They might have known better, and did know better; nevertheless they persisted in their iniquity, challenging, by their very conduct, Jehovah to do his worst (see on Amos ii, 7). Of the three pronouns, "thee," "thereof" (of it), "ye," two are masculine in the original, one is feminine; two are singular, one is plural. It will be necessary, therefore, to distinguish between the persons addressed: "thee" refers to the nation (see on verse 13); "thereof" to Jerusalem or, some think with less probability, to "desolation" —desolated land; "ye" to the individuals constituting the nation (see above). This seems a satisfactory explanation; others, however, alter the text so as to bring the pronouns in agreement with one another. **Desolation**—While this is one meaning of the word, in parallelism with "hissing" the meaning suggested in the margin, "astonishment," is to be preferred, or still better, "object of astonishment" or "of horror" (compare Deut. xxviii, 37; Jer. xxv, 9; li, 37). **Hissing**—An object of hissing or derision. **The reproach of my people**—The reproach which Israel, the chosen people of Jehovah, must bear when the heathen nations will triumph over it; for such a triumph will be to the conquerors a clear proof of Jehovah's inability or unwillingness to help. LXX. reads, "the reproach of the nations," that is, the reproach brought upon Israel by the surrounding nations. The latter may be the original reading (see on Joel ii, 17).

CHAPTER VII.

Hopelessness of the Nation's Condition, 1–6.

Scholars are not agreed on the person of the speaker in these verses; some think of the prophet, some of Zion, some of the "true Israel," that is, Israel after the spirit. If there is any connection between vii, 1–6, and chapter vi, which is, to say the least, quite probable, it seems best to consider the prophet as the speaker. He attempts to describe "the desperate condition of the nation, anarchy, persecution, universal corruption of justice, the ties of society dissolved, even friendship and wedded love is no longer to be trusted." If Zion is understood as the speaker the verses imply a humility and penitence out of place following immediately upon vi, 16; hence most recent commentators who make Zion the speaker deny the verses to Micah.

In verse 1 the prophet bewails, in figurative language, his sad and disappointing experience in preaching to the people. **Grape gleanings**—He was looking for good *clusters* of grapes, but he found nothing but poor gleanings. **My soul desired the first ripe fruit**—

CHAPTER VII.

WOE is me! for I am as [1]when they have gathered the summer fruits, as [a]the grape gleanings of the vintage: *there is* no cluster to eat: [b]my soul desired the firstripe

25. 8; Jer. 51. 51; Lam. 5. 1.——[1] Heb. *the gatherings of summer*.——[a] Isa. 17. 6; 24. 13.——[b] Isa. 28. 4; Hos. 9. 10.

fruit. 2 The [c] [2]good *man* is perished out of the earth: and *there is* none upright among men: they all lie in wait for blood; [d]they hunt every man his brother with a net.

3 That they may do evil with both hands earnestly, [e]the prince asketh, [f]and the judge *asketh* for a reward; and the great *man*, he uttereth [3]his mischievous desire: so they wrap it up. 4 The best of them [g]*is* as a brier: the most upright *is sharper*

[c] Psa. 12. 1; 14. 1, 3; Isa. 57. 1.—[2] Or, *godly*, or, *merciful*.—[d] Hab. 1. 15.—[e] Hos. 4. 18.

[f] Isa. 1. 23; chap. 3. 11.—[3] Heb. *the mischief of his soul*.—[g] 2 Sam. 23. 6, 7; Ezek. 2. 6; see Isa. 55.13.

The context favors the rendering of R. V. margin, "nor first-ripe fig which my soul desired." He looked for first-ripe figs (see on Hos. ix, 10), but found none.

The figures are explained in verses 2–6. As he gazed about him he saw nothing but corruption and violence. **Earth . . . among men**—Since the prophet is not thinking here of the whole earth, but of the land of Judah and its inhabitants, we should read "land" for "earth," the Hebrew word having both meanings (otherwise in verse 13). **Good** ["godly"]—This word is from the same root as that translated in vi, 8, "mercy," R. V., "kindness" (see on Hos. ii, 19). Here the adjective has an active meaning, he who shows kindness toward his fellow men. Such men have disappeared entirely (iii, 2, 3; vi, 10–16; compare Hos. iv, 1, 2). **Upright**—All have become crooked and corrupt. **They all lie in wait for blood**—Anxiously they are looking for opportunities to commit robbery and violence; and to accomplish their desires they are quite ready to shed blood (see on iii, 10). **Brother**—In the wider sense of "fellow citizen" or "neighbor." **Hunt . . . with a net**—They have quenched the instincts of love and sympathy; they are scheming continually to do harm to one another.

The interpretation of verses 3, 4 is very uncertain. To remove the obscurities various emendations of the text have been proposed. If the present Hebrew text is correct, R. V. presents a more satisfactory translation of verse 3: "Their hands are upon that which is evil to do it diligently; the prince asketh, and the judge is ready for a reward; and the great man, he uttereth the evil desire of his soul: thus they weave it together." Following this translation the meaning seems to be: **Their hands**—Literally, *both hands*. All hands are stretched out to do evil; selfishness rules everywhere, and all are bent upon satisfying their own selfish ambitions. The prophet now enumerates those whose guilt is the greatest. **Prince**—See on Hos. iii, 4. **Judge**—The one occupying a judicial position. **Great man**—The man of wealth, power, and influence. **They weave it together**—The three classes enumerated conspire together to carry out their evil schemes (compare 1 Kings xxi, 13). How they work together is also indicated. **The prince asketh**—Of the judge, to overlook a crime committed by a friend of the prince, or to condemn a man who has displeased him, though he may be innocent. **The judge . . . for a reward**—The Hebrew has no verb; but if the present text is correct R. V. undoubtedly reproduces correctly the thought. The judge is ready to accept a reward or bribe offered by the prince, and for such consideration he readily assents to the latter's demands. **The great man . . . uttereth**—The wealthy and powerful man freely makes known his desires, for he knows that his money and influence "talk," and will secure for him the coöperation of others. Thus the nobles conspire together and rob and murder unhindered (compare Isa. i, 21–23; Amos v, 12). **The best of them is as a briar**—Which pricks, hurts, and injures. Corruption in Judah is so widespread that even he who stands out as the best and the most upright is worse than a thorn

than a thorn hedge: the day of thy watchmen *and* thy visitation cometh; now shall be their perplexity.

5 [h]Trust ye not in a friend, put ye not confidence in a guide: keep the doors of thy mouth from her that

[h] Jer. 9. 4.—[i] Ezek. 22. 7; Matt. 10. 21, 35, 36; Luke 12. 53; 21. 16; 2 Tim. 3. 2, 3.

lieth in thy bosom. 6 For [i]the son dishonoreth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter in law against her mother in law; a man's enemies *are* the men of his own house. 7 There-

hedge (compare 2 Sam. xxiii, 6; Prov. xv, 19).

Thus far the prophet has described the present hopeless condition; with the present deal also verses 5, 6. Hence the context would favor the interpretation of 4b also as dealing with the present. However, the text itself is generally thought to point to a future judgment. Can 4b be regarded as a marginal gloss based upon Isa. iii, 1–7? **The day of thy watchmen**—The day foreseen by the watchmen of Jehovah or of Israel, the prophets (Isa. xxi, 6); the day of Jehovah (see on Joel i, 15), a day to which the prophets preceding Micah refer quite frequently. This day is called "thy visitation" or "judgment," because on it judgment will be executed on all the enemies of Jehovah. **Cometh** ["is come"]—The *prophetic* perfect (see on vi, 13). **Now**—It is close at hand. **Their perplexity**—The change from the second to the third person is not uncommon in prophetic discourse (G.-K., 144p.). The judgment will produce the wildest confusion (Isa. xxii, 5), so that they will not know what to do.

Some interpret verses 5, 6 as explanatory of "perplexity," in the sense that "at the outbreak of judgment and of the visitation the faithlessness will reach the height of treachery to the nearest friends, yea, even to the dissolution of every family tie." This interpretation is based upon the New Testament use of these verses (Matt. x, 35, 36; Luke xii, 53). However, in the light of the context it seems better to regard the verses a continuation of 4a, describing, in the form of warnings, the awfulness of the present corruption. Friendship can be trusted no longer, truth and fidelity are unknown, all alike practice deceit. **Friend . . . guide . . . her that lieth in thy bosom**—A climax. The friend (R. V., "neighbor") is the person with whom one has ordinary, everyday intercourse; the guide (R. V., "friend"; margin, "confidant"), he to whom one is bound by closer ties of intimacy and friendship. Neither can be trusted any longer; and even the wife lying upon the bosom is not worthy of confidence, for she does not hesitate to betray her husband by revealing his secrets. "The closest ties of blood-relationship are trodden under foot, and all the bonds of reverence, love, and chastity are loosened." **Dishonoreth**—Literally, *treats as a fool* (Deut. xxxii, 15). **Men of his own house**—These are not the persons already named, but others who formed a part of a Hebrew household, the servants (Gen. xxxix, 19; 2 Sam. xii, 17, 18).

Confidence of the Penitent Community in a Final Deliverance, 7–10.

As these verses stand now, one might suppose, on first thought, that they came from the same speaker as verses 1–6. The prophet, having bewailed the present corruption of his fellow citizens, breaks out, "Whatever they may do, as for me, I will look unto Jehovah." But the language of verses 8–10 clearly shows that the speaker cannot be the prophet; he must be the people, or at least a remnant of the people. If the verses come from Micah we must assume that he pictures to himself the nation in the midst of the calamity, which he has repeatedly announced. A remnant, he believes, will remain loyal, and into the mouth of this personified

fore [k]I will look unto the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me.

8 [l]Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: [m]when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, [n]the LORD *shall be* a light unto me. 9 [o]I will bear the indignation of the LORD, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: [p]he will bring me forth to the light, *and* I shall behold his righteousness. 10 [4]Then *she that is* mine enemy shall see *it*, and [q]shame shall cover her which said unto me, [r]Where is the LORD thy God? [s]mine eyes shall behold her: now [5]shall she be trodden

[k] Isa. 8. 17.——[l] Prov. 24. 17; Lam. 4. 21.——[m] Psa. 37. 24; Prov. 24. 16.——[n] Psa. 27. 1.——[o] Lam. 3. 39.——[p] Psa. 37. 6.——[4] Or, *And thou wilt see her that is mine enemy, and cover her with shame.*——[q] Psa. 35. 26.——[r] Psa. 42. 3, 10; 79. 10; 115. 2; Joel 2. 17.——[s] Chap. 4. 11.——[5] Heb. *she shall be for a treading down.*

remnant, sitting in darkness, overpowered by the enemy, he places supplications for speedy deliverance, and expressions of confidence. The contrast between the moral and spiritual condition of the people described in verses 1–6 and the humility and confidence expressed in verses 7–10 is very remarkable. Either Micah was a man of extraordinary dramatic power and of wonderful imagination, or the verses cannot come from him. **I will look . . . wait**—The old stubbornness is gone; softened through suffering, the remnant is ready to wait patiently until Jehovah will interfere on its behalf. **The God of my salvation**—He alone can deliver (see on Hos. xiv, 3; compare Psa. xxvii, 9). **Will hear**—The suppliant is convinced that God will hear, and that the hearing assures a gracious answer (Isa. xxx, 19). Upheld by this sublime confidence, the petitioner turns to the arrogant enemy that oppresses Israel. **Rejoice not**—For your triumph will not be permanent. **When I fall**—A picture of calamity and distress. By the help of Jehovah the remnant expects to rise again. **Sit in darkness**—Another figure of calamity and trouble. Jehovah will keep a watchful eye on his people and will be their "light"—through the promises which illumine the gloom and keep alive hope and courage.

In the assurance that Jehovah is still God, and in the consciousness of its sin and guilt, the remnant is willing to bear patiently its present affliction. **I will bear the indignation**—Because I deserve it, and because in due time Jehovah will again smile upon me. **Plead my cause, . . . execute judgment**—The enemy has gone beyond his commission (Isa. x, 5ff.; Hab. i, 11), hence Israel has cause for complaint; but it is willing to leave its case in the hands of Jehovah; he will punish the proud foe and recompense the remnant for its sufferings. **Light**—Of prosperity and felicity. **I shall behold his righteousness**—Which will manifest itself in the deliverance from the enemy. In this God acts *righteously*, because the preservation and deliverance of the people is in accord with the covenant relation existing between him and Israel.

When Jehovah will thus interfere on behalf of his people, the enemy, arrogant on account of temporary success, will be confounded. **Where is Jehovah thy God**—See on Joel ii, 17. **Mine eyes shall behold her**—R. V., "Mine eyes shall see my desire upon her." These words and the rest of the verse might possibly be interpreted as a continuation of the boast. When the enemy beheld the misfortune of Zion he thought that he would speedily see his desire upon her, that is, would see her completely in his power, for he would now have an easy time with the unfortunate people. It seems better, however, to understand the words as an expression of confidence on the part of the hopeful remnant. The latter expects to see its desire upon its enemy, who will be trodden down as the mire of the street (Isa. x, 6), while the remnant will be exalted and glorified.

down [t]as the mire of the streets. **11** *In* the day that thy [u]walls are to be built, *in* that day shall the decree be far removed. **12** *In* that day *also* [x]he shall come even to thee from Assyria, [s]and *from* the fortified cities, and from the fortress even to the river, and from sea to sea, and *from* mountain to mountain. **13** [7]Notwithstanding the land

[t] 2 Sam. 22. 43; Zech. 10. 5.—[u] Amos 9. 11, etc.

[x] Isa. 11. 16; 19. 23, etc.; 27. 13; Hos. 11. 11.—[s] Or, *even to.*—[7] Or, *After that it hath been.*

PROMISE OF A GLORIOUS RESTORATION, 11–13.

In verses 11ff. the speaker is no longer the penitent, expectant remnant, but Jehovah himself, or the prophet as the spokesman of Jehovah. He comforts and encourages the speaker of verses 7–10 with promises of a glorious restoration. Marti, in order to avoid a change in speakers, reads throughout the pronouns of the first person.

It is impossible to accept the text of verses 11, 12 as correct in every detail; on the other hand, the text is probably not as corrupt as is assumed by some scholars. Of the present text, A. V. does not offer the best translation. Two or three slight changes, supported in part by LXX., will produce a much better text (compare also R. V.): "A day for the building of thy walls shall that day be; extended shall be thy border on that day; and they shall come unto thee from Assyria and the cities of Egypt, and from Egypt even to the River, and from sea to sea, and from mountain to mountain." **In the day that thy walls are to be built**—Better, R.V., "A day for building thy walls!" The breaking down of the walls is threatened in iii, 12; in the day of restoration they will be rebuilt. **Decree**—This translation gives no good sense, and all attempts at interpretation have proved futile. Hence it is better to follow R. V. margin in translating "boundary" or "border." In the day of restoration the borders of the promised land will be extended so as to make room for the returning exiles (Obad. 18–21). The word, which is rare in this sense, was used because of the similarity in sound between it and the original of "removed" or "extended." **That day**—The day in which the expectations expressed in verses 7–10 will be realized.

Verse 12 contains a promise that in "that" day multitudes will flock to Jerusalem from every direction. **He shall come**—R. V., "shall they come." A. V. is a literal rendering of the original. Who shall come? Some find the answer in iv, 3 (compare Isa. xix, 24). From all parts of the world people will flock to Jehovah to be instructed by him. Others think of the return from exile; the exiles who were scattered in all directions will return to their old home. Perhaps both ideas are included. **Assyria**—The place of exile of the northern tribes (2 Kings xvii, 23). **Egypt**—So far as we know no Hebrews had been carried into exile to Egypt before the time of Micah, but after the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B. C. some took refuge there (2 Kings xxv, 26). Hence many think that this promise presupposes the exile (compare Isa. xi, 11ff.). There is much to be said in favor of this view, though the mention of Egypt as a place of exile does not absolutely prove a late date, in view of Hosea's expectation of an Egyptian exile (viii, 13; ix, 3, 6). If Micah shared this view—of which we have no evidence—he would naturally mention Egypt in a description of the restoration. No difficulty exists if the words are interpreted as pointing to a flocking of non-Israelitish worshipers to Jehovah (compare Isa. xix, 24). **The river**—The Euphrates. The second clause is identical in meaning with the first. **Sea . . . mountain**—The prophet may not have in mind any special sea or mountain; the expression may be used simply to indicate all parts of the known world. If he is thinking of

shall be desolate because of them that dwell therein, [y]for the fruit of their doings.

14 [s]Feed thy people with thy rod, the flock of thine heritage, which dwell solitary *in* [z]the wood, in the midst of Carmel: let them feed *in* Bashan and Gilead, as in the days

[y] Jer. 21. 14; chap. 3. 12.—[s] Or, *Rule*, Psa. 28. 9; chap. 5. 4.—[z] Isa. 37. 24.

definite locations the seas would probably be the Mediterranean in the west and the Persian Gulf in the southeast, the mountains perhaps Mount Lebanon in the north and Mount Sinai in the south, unless we suppose that he is thinking of the far-away mountains beyond Assyria and Egypt.

The rendering of verse 13 in A. V. and R. V. is a translation *plus* an interpretation. "Land" is understood as referring to Palestine. Before the glory expected in verses 7–10 and promised in verses 11, 12 can be realized the land must be destroyed (iii, 12) because of the unrighteous doings of its inhabitants. Another interpretation seems more in harmony with the context. Instead of "land" we should read "earth" (compare verse 2), and verse 13 should be rendered, "But the earth shall be desolate because of them that dwell therein, for the fruit of their doings." This is to be understood as a threat of the destruction of the whole earth, exclusive of Palestine, because of the outrages committed by its inhabitants against the people of Jehovah. This judgment upon the nations will make possible the return of the exiles (compare Joel iii, 7, 8; also Jer. xxxii, 20, where "men" is used of the nations outside of Israel).

THE PRAYER OF THE PEOPLE, 14–17.

In verse 14 occurs another change in speakers. The people, through the prophet, pray for the fulfillment of the promise of restoration. **Feed . . . with thy rod**—See on v, 4. **Flock of thine heritage**—Since Micah uses several times the figure of the shepherd (Gen. xlix, 24), this expression is used instead of the more common "people of thine heritage." **Which dwell solitarily in the wood, in the midst of Carmel**—The English translations are correct in connecting the entire relative clause with "thine heritage." This relative clause is to be understood not as expressing the desire that the faithful remnant may be permitted to dwell apart from the nations of the world, but as describing a present condition—"which *now* dwell solitarily." **In the wood**—R. V., "forest." The original has no preposition; it seems better to omit it in the translation, and to take the words in apposition to the preceding "which dwell solitarily," "a forest (better, *jungle*) in the midst of Carmel." The meaning becomes still clearer if "Carmel" is taken as a common noun "garden land" (compare Isa. xxxvii, 24; where it is translated "fruitful field"). Then the whole clause will read, "which dwell solitarily, a jungle in the midst of a garden," which describes the condition of the petitioner. The enemies are flourishing like a beautiful garden; in the midst of them lives the miserable petitioner like a wild jungle in a garden, without beauty or comeliness. O that the shepherd would lead his flock into green pastures! **Bashan . . . Gilead**—Districts east of the Jordan which were renowned for their rich pastures (see on Amos i, 3; iv, 1; compare Num. xxxii, 1ff.); here they are mentioned as types of rich pasture land. **Days of old**—A very indefinite expression referring to the period of prosperity preceding the present distress (see on v, 2, where the words are translated "everlasting").

The present text would make verse 15 the reply of Jehovah to the petition expressed in verse 14. But (1) the change in pronouns, "thy coming forth" and "unto him," is peculiar; (2) 17b places it beyond doubt that verses 16, 17 continue the petition to Jehovah. This makes it at least prob-

of old. **15** [a]According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I show unto him marvelous *things*.

16 The nations [b]shall see and be confounded at all their might: [c]they shall lay *their* hand upon *their* mouth, their ears shall be deaf. **17** They shall lick the [d]dust like a serpent, [e]they shall move out of their holes like [g]worms of the earth: [f]they shall be afraid of the LORD our God, and shall fear because of thee. **18** [g]Who *is* a God like unto thee, that [h]pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of [i]the remnant of his heritage? [k]he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth *in* mercy. **19** He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. **20** [l]Thou wilt perform the

[a] Psa. 68. 22; 78. 12.—[b] Isa. 26. 11.—[c] Job 21. 5; 29. 9.—[d] Psa. 72. 9; Isa. 49. 23.—[e] Psa. 18. 45.—[g] Or, *creeping things*.

[f] Jer. 33. 9.—[g] Exod. 15. 11.—[h] Exod. 34. 6, 7; Jer. 50. 20.—[i] Chaps. 4, 7; 5, 3, 7, 8.—[k] Psa. 103. 9; Isa. 57. 16; Jer. 3. 5.—[l] Luke 1. 72, 73.

able that verse 15 is a part of the petition, and we may be justified in altering one consonant so that the verb will read, "do thou show unto us." **Thy coming out**—R. V., "thy coming forth out." The coming forth of Jehovah to lead the people from Egypt at the time of the Exodus (compare Judg. v, 4). **Marvelous things**—The same term is applied in Exod. iii, 20, to the plagues which Jehovah brought upon Egypt to compel the release of his people. Similar superhuman manifestations they desire in their present crisis.

Verses 16, 17 continue the petition, pointing out the effects which the "marvelous things" of Jehovah will have upon the nations. When the latter see the mighty works of Jehovah they will be confounded. **At all their might**—Their might will count for nothing in the presence of an almighty God (compare Hos. iv, 19). **Lay their hand upon their mouth**—See on iii, 7 (compare Judg. xviii, 19; Job xxi, 5). **Their ears shall be deaf**—"From the thunder of his mighty acts" (Job xxvi, 14; compare Isa. xxxiii, 3). In terror they will prostrate themselves before Jehovah. **Lick the dust**—A figurative expression equivalent to "prostrate themselves in the dust," a sign of submission (Isa. xlix, 23). **Like a serpent**—Compare Gen. iii, 14. **They shall move out of their holes like worms of the earth**—R. V., "like crawling things of the earth they shall come trembling out of their close places." A picture of abject fear (compare Psa. xviii, 45). The terror of the nations is emphasized also in the rest of verse 17.

A Doxology, 18–20.

Reveling in the thought of a glorious future, the prophet ascribes all honor and praise to Jehovah, who alone is God. **Who is a God like unto thee**—The question may contain a play upon the name Micah, which means *Who is like Jehovah?* If vii, 7–20, does not come from the prophet Micah (see p. 368), does this play explain why the verses were embodied in the Book of Micah? To the author Jehovah is supreme; and of all the divine attributes Jehovah's compassion and loving-kindness impress him most deeply. **Pardoneth iniquity**—Compare Exod. xxxiv, 7, "forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." **The remnant of his heritage**—See on v, 3, and reference there; also on Joel iii, 2. For the close of verse 18 compare Psa. ciii, 8, 9 (see on Joel ii, 13). **He will turn again**—Better, R. V., "He will again have compassion." He cannot cast off forever his children. **Subdue**—R. V., "tread our iniquities under foot." He will trample upon sin as upon an enemy; equivalent to "he will destroy."

In 19b the prophet returns to the direct address, from which the use of participles caused him to depart. **Cast . . . into . . . the sea**—Never to be

truth to Jacob, *and* the mercy to Abraham, [m]which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.

[m] Psa. 105. 9, 10.

raised again. The expression may contain an allusion to the destruction of Pharaoh's army (Exod. xv, 5, 10). Verse 20 closes the doxology and the entire book with an expression of confidence that Jehovah will deal with his people according to the promise made to the fathers. **Jacob . . . Abraham**—These two names are applied to the nation because to these two ancestors were given the most precious promises (Gen. xxii, 16-18; xxxv, 9ff.). **Days of old**—Points to the patriarchal age when the promise was first given, but also to subsequent repetitions of the promise.

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF NAHUM.

The Prophet.

Of the life of Nahum we know practically nothing. The name occurs nowhere else in the Old Testament; in the New Testament it is found in Luke iii, 25; it is not uncommon in the Mishna; and it has been discovered in Phœnician inscriptions. It means *consolation* or *consoler,* and is therefore in a sense symbolical of the message of the book, which is intended to comfort the oppressed and afflicted people of Judah.

The prophet is called "the Elkoshite" (i, 1), which undoubtedly means that he came from a place *Elkosh,* just as Morasthite (Mic. i, 1) means a citizen of Moresheth. It has been interpreted also as meaning "of the family of Elkosh," but that is less probable. For Elkosh four locations have been suggested:

1. It has been identified with a modern village, *Elkush* or *Alkosh,* not far from the left bank of the Tigris, two days' journey north of the site of ancient Nineveh. Concerning this place Layard (*Nineveh and Its Remains,* i, 197) says: "Alkosh is a very considerable Christian village. Its inhabitants, who were formerly pure Chaldeans, have been converted to Roman Catholicism. It contains, according to a very general tradition, the tomb of Nahum, the prophet. . . . It is a place held in great reverence by Mohammedans and Christians, but especially by Jews, who keep the building in repair, and flock here in great numbers at certain seasons of the year. The tomb is a simple plaster box, covered with green cloth, and standing at the upper end of a large chamber. On the walls of the room are slips of paper, upon which are written, in distorted Hebrew characters, religious exhortations and dates and particulars of the visits of various Jewish families.

The house containing the tomb is a modern building. There are no inscriptions nor fragments of any antiquity about the place; and I am not aware in what the tradition originated, or how long it has attached to the village of Alkosh." If this village or its predecessor upon the same site is the home of Nahum, the prophet must be regarded as a descendant of one of the families of the northern kingdom carried into exile by Sargon in 721. In support of this view attention has been called to the prophet's accurate knowledge of Nineveh and things Assyrian. He uses Assyrian words (see on iii, 17); is well acquainted with the capital city, its brick walls (iii, 15), the river gates (ii, 6), its temples and images (i, 14), its immense wealth (ii, 9, 12), its vast population (ii, 8; iii, 15), the crowd of merchants (iii, 16), etc. From a resident of a neighboring village, who might have visited the capital on many occasions, all this would sound very natural. It is not strange, therefore, to find that several scholars, especially Assyriologists like Jeremias, Friedrich Delitzsch, and others, believe that the Assyrian Alkosh was the home or, at least, the temporary dwelling place of the prophet Nahum.

Others do not consider the evidence conclusive. (1) The knowledge of Nineveh is not so minute that the writer could not have acquired it without actually living in Assyria. His knowledge of *No Amon* is no less precise, but few would insist that Nahum ever saw the Egyptian city. Enough was known of Assyria in Palestine during the seventh century B. C. to make it quite possible for a man possessed of the poetic genius of Nahum to draw the vivid pictures contained in chapters ii, iii. (2) The tradition connecting Nahum with the Assyrian Alkosh cannot be traced beyond the sixteenth century A. D.; indeed, all references to the place itself are later than the seventh century A. D. (3) There is not the slightest indication in the book that its author was a descendant of a northern family. His interest centers in Judah (i, 11, 15). These considerations make it appear quite probable that a comparatively late age is responsible for the connection of Nahum

with the Assyrian Alkosh. The similarity of the name to that of the prophet's home and the fact that he prophesied concerning Nineveh might easily give rise to such tradition. In a similar manner a late age seems to have found a resting place for the prophet Jonah in the city of Nineveh, because he was thought to have preached there; a part of the ruins of the ancient city bears even to-day the name *Nebi Yunus,* "Prophet Jonah."

2. A second tradition, apparently of greater antiquity, locates Elkosh in Galilee. Jerome, in the preface of his commentary on Nahum, says: "*Elkesi* (or *Helkesei*) is still at this day a hamlet in Galilee, small indeed, and scarcely showing traces by ruins of ancient buildings, but for all that known to the Jews and pointed out to me by a guide." The fact that Jerome saw this place does not necessarily prove that the identification with the home of Nahum is well founded; for Jerome may simply repeat a popular tradition, or the identification suggested by the similarity of the two names may have its origin with him. The place named by Jerome has been identified, though not conclusively, with the modern *El Kauze,* near Ramieh. Other ancient writers repeat Jerome's statement, and there are some moderns who accept his identification as correct. A few peculiarities in the diction of the book have been adduced as favoring a Galilean origin, but these are more or less doubtful. If Jerome's view concerning the home of Nahum is correct we would have to think of the prophet as a descendant of one of the families left behind in 721, who moved from his northern home into the territory of Judah.

The correctness of this identification cannot be proved nor can it be disproved; but on this theory the silence of Nahum concerning the northern kingdom and his apparent indifference toward its restoration seems strange; hence many believe that the contents of the book point in a different direction.

3. Others who seek the home of the prophet in the north identify Elkosh with the city of Capernaum, whose name means *village of Nahum.* The original name of the city, it

is thought, was Elkosh, but in honor of its renowned citizen it was changed into Capernaum. The identification finds its only support in the present name of the city, but this can hardly be considered conclusive; there certainly is no indication anywhere of a change in name such as is assumed by those favoring it.

4. A fourth tradition places Elkosh in the south of Judah, or, more correctly, in the territory of Simeon. It first appears in a collection of traditions entitled *Lives of the Prophets,* ascribed, though perhaps erroneously, to Epiphanius, bishop of Salamis in Cyprus during the latter part of the fourth century A. D. In it we read, "Nahum was from Elkosh, beyond *Bêt Gabrê,* of the tribe of Simeon." *Bêt Gabrê* is undoubtedly the modern *Beit Jibrin,* the ancient Eleutheropolis, northeast of Lachish (see on Mic. i, 13). Cyril of Alexandria also says that Elkese was a village in the country of the Jews. A place in Judah is undoubtedly more in harmony with the interest the prophet takes in the southern kingdom; and the present writer inclines to this view, though certainty on this point is perhaps not attainable.

Date of the Prophet.

The date of Nahum's activity must be determined from the contents of his prophecies.

The *terminus a quo* is the capture and destruction of No Amon, the Egyptian Thebes, which in iii, 8ff., is referred to as an accomplished fact. The catastrophe alluded to can be no other than the capture of Thebes by Ashurbanapal, king of Assyria (668-626 B. C.). Of the capture of the city during his second campaign the annals of the king say: "In confidence upon Ashur and Ishtar my hands completely captured the city. Silver, gold, precious stones, the possessions of his palace, as many as were there, garments of gay-colored goods, gorgeous garments, great horses, men, people male and female, two high obelisks of shining *zaḫalu,* whose weight was twenty-five hundred talents, which stood before the entrance of the

temple, I removed from their positions and carried them to Assyria. Heavy booty without number I carried away from Thebes. Over Egypt and Ethiopia I caused my arms to glitter and I established my sovereignty. With full hands and in safety I returned to Nineveh, my capital." In another place he says, "This city they (the soldiers) took from all sides, and dashed it to pieces like a hurricane." This expedition against Thebes occurred about 663 B. C., hence 663 is the earliest date to which the prophecy of Nahum can be assigned.

The *terminus ad quem* is the destruction of Nineveh; for the tone of the entire prophecy implies that, while the destruction of the city is imminent, it is still in the future. Nineveh fell in 607-606 B. C. Hence between 663 and 607 the activity of Nahum must be placed.

Can the date be fixed more definitely between the two dates? On this point opinions differ very widely. The vividness of the description of the fall of No Amon leads some to favor a date soon after that catastrophe; on the other hand, the realistic picture of the distress of Nineveh causes others to select a date just before the latter's doom. The following dates have been suggested: Riehm, 660-607; Strack, about 660; Rogers and Koenig, about 650; Kirkpatrick, soon after 640; Cornill, 624; Davidson, "a date 610-608 for the prophecy is well within the range of possibility"; Nowack and Marti favor the same date; and G. A. Smith says, "He might as well have written it about 608 as about 625."

One thing is made quite clear by the prophecy itself, namely, that at the time the words were uttered or written Nineveh was passing through some grave danger. Now, during the period indicated Assyria passed through two, and perhaps three, serious crises: 1. During the revolt of Shamashshumukin, of Babylon, against his brother Ashurbanapal, of Assyria, 650-648 B. C. 2. Herodotus reports that about 625 Nineveh was seriously threatened by foreign invaders. These invaders are undoubtedly to be identified with the Manda of the Assyrian inscriptions, the savage hordes, commonly called

Scythians, which threatened the integrity of the Assyrian empire as early as the reign of Esarhaddon (681-668 B. C.). The Manda are not identical with the Medes, though the latter are probably related to the former. The statement of Herodotus that this attack upon Nineveh was made by the Medes rests probably upon a confusion of the two names *Manda* and *Medes* (see introduction to Zephaniah; article "Medes," in Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible;* but compare article "Scythians" in *Encyclopædia Biblica*). 3. Nineveh, after a siege of two years, was taken and destroyed in 607-606.

The first crisis does not offer a suitable occasion for Nahum's prophecy, because at that time the city of Nineveh was never threatened. The crisis was serious enough, for Shamashshumukin was supported by several states that, like himself, were anxious to throw off the overlordship of Assyria; but the territory of Assyria was not seriously menaced. The Assyrian king found it an easy task to drive the rebels from his own land; he carried the war into hostile territory, where he inflicted a series of crushing defeats upon the rebels.

The inscriptions throw little light upon the events connected with the inroads of the Scythians, and it is generally recognized that the statements of Herodotus must be received with considerable caution. Some question the truth of the latter's statement concerning an attack upon Nineveh about 625. For this there may be insufficient reason; but it is impossible to tell how seriously Nineveh was menaced at that time. This uncertainty makes it impossible either to prove or disprove that the crisis of 625 offered a suitable occasion for Nahum's utterances.

During the last years of Ashurbanapal's reign the Assyrian empire was slowly going to pieces. After his death the end approached more rapidly. In 625 Nabopolassar established an independent kingdom in Babylon. With the Scythians pressing from the north and the new Babylonian power from the south, Assyria was, indeed, in serious peril. Finally, about 610, Nabopolassar entered into an alliance with the Manda

and together they advanced against Nineveh. The struggle continued for two years. The united forces met determined resistance; at last a breach was made in the northeast corner of the wall; the city was taken, plundered, and burned. The Assyrian world power was at an end. Judah had suffered much from the proud Assyrian, and it is not difficult to understand how, with the doom of Nineveh so imminent, a prophet-patriot might burst into shouts of exultation and triumph over the distress of the cruel foe. The years immediately preceding the final overthrow of the city offer the most suitable occasion for Nahum's utterances. "If," says A. B. Davidson, "the distress of Nineveh referred to were the final one, the descriptions of the prophecy would acquire a reality and naturalness which they otherwise want, and the general characteristics of Hebrew prophecy would be more truly conserved."

Since the prophecy deals almost exclusively with the fall of Nineveh, it is not necessary to consider in this connection conditions in Judah at the same time (see below, on Zephaniah).

The Integrity of the Book.

Until quite recently no doubts were expressed concerning the integrity of the Book of Nahum; but within recent years scholars have, with growing unanimity, denied the originality of i, 2—ii, 2 (Hebrew ii, 3), with the exception of ii, 1, which is considered the beginning of Nahum's utterances. This change of opinion is closely bound up with the alleged discovery of distorted remnants of an old alphabetic poem in chapter i. In his commentary on Psa. ix Delitzsch, following a suggestion of "Pastor Frohnmeyer of Würtemberg," makes the remark, "Even the prophet does not disdain, as is evident from Nah. i, 3-7, to allow the sequence of the letters of the alphabet to have an influence upon the arrangement of his thought." Following this clue, Gustav Bickell, who deserves much credit for his efforts toward a better understanding of Hebrew poetry, has at various times between 1880 and 1894 attempted a restoration of this ancient poem. Several other

scholars have undertaken, in their own way, the solution of the problem, among them Gunkel, Nowack, Happel, G. B. Gray, T. K. Cheyne, and W. R. Arnold. The last-named characterizes the several efforts—apart from his own—in these words: "Starting with a bald assumption as to the main point at issue, conjecture has been substituted for conjecture in matters of detail, and not the slightest endeavor made to justify the hypothesis or conjecture by reference to observed facts." These words apply with equal justice to the work of Arnold himself. Of those who have studied the subject in detail G. B. Gray appears to approach the subject with greatest caution. "We must therefore," says he, "distinguish between the proof that Nahum contains traces of an acrostic which, when the evidence is duly presented, is cogent, and certain details of reconstruction, which are requisite if an entire acrostic is to be restored, but for which the evidence is in one or two cases strong, in many slight, and in some nil." A full discussion of the subject would require more space and a more extensive use of the Hebrew than a commentary of this character permits. Those who desire to study the subject at greater length may see article "Nahum" in Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible; Expositor* of 1898, pp. 207ff.; *Zeitschrift fuer Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft,* 1901, pp. 225ff.

In i, 2-7, there are unquestionable traces of alphabetic arrangement, but even here the artistic arrangement is not carried through consistently; in the rest of the chapter the evidence is slight. "The first nine verses," says Kennedy, "have suffered little, the next four or five considerably more, and the rest so much that their restoration can never be more than an academic exercise." In order to restore the acrostic it becomes necessary, at least from verse 7 onward, to take much liberty with the text; frequently words must be inserted or omitted; words and even clauses must be transposed; sometimes a passage must be almost entirely rewritten. In the presence of such difficulties and uncertainties the differences of opinion among those who have attempted reconstructions

are not surprising; nor is it strange that many excellent Old Testament scholars hesitate to accept as correct any of the numerous reconstructions attempted, and that they doubt even the possibility of restoring, with any degree of assurance, the original acrostic. "Even if it should be assumed," says A. B. Davidson, "that an alphabetical poem lurks under chapter i, the attempt to restore it can never be more than an academic exercise." Driver expresses similar doubts: "Undoubtedly there are traces of an alphabetic arrangement in the successive half verses; but we own to feeling great doubt whether this was ever intended to be carried systematically through, or whether it is due to anything more than the fact that the author allowed himself here and there, perhaps half accidentally, to follow the alphabetical order; the very extensive alterations, especially the inversions and transpositions through which, if the restoration be correct, the text must have passed, seem to us to be intrinsically impossible."

In many places the text of chapter i has undoubtedly suffered in transmission (see comments), but the assumption that it contained originally an alphabetic poem presupposes so many corruptions where otherwise no difficulties could be seen that one may well hesitate to accept any of the ingenious restorations offered; and one may safely say that both the presence of an acrostic and its recovery are still open questions.

A comparison of the translation of i, 2—ii, 2 (except ii, 1), in R. V. with the following, which reproduces the text as reconstructed by Nowack, may be of interest. Wherever possible the wording of R. V. has been retained:

2. א A God jealous and avenging is Jehovah,
   An avenger and full of wrath is Jehovah.
3c. ב In storm and tempest is his way,
   Clouds and dust are at his feet.
4. ג He rebuketh the sea, so that it drieth up,
   And he maketh dry all the rivers;
   ד Bashan and Carmel languish,
   And the flower of Lebanon withereth.

5. ה Mountains quake because of him,
And the hills do melt.
ו The earth becometh desolate before him,
The world with all that dwell therein.
6. ז Who can endure his indignation?
Who can abide in the fierceness of his anger?
ח His wrath is poured out like fire,
And rocks are kindled by him.
7. ט Good is Jehovah toward those who trust in him,
A stronghold in the day of trouble.
י Jehovah knoweth those who trust in him,
8. And in the overflowing flood he delivereth them.
כ An utter end he maketh of his adversaries,
And his enemies he thrusteth out into darkness.
9c. ל Not twice he taketh vengeance on his adversaries,
9b. An utter end he maketh of them forever.
9a. מ What think ye of Jehovah?
3a. Jehovah is slow to anger and great in loving-kindness;
2c. נ An avenger is Jehovah against his adversaries,
And he reserveth wrath for his enemies;
10. ס Like plucked-up thorns they are swept away,
Like dry grass they are withered.
12. ע The arrogance of tyrants is like high water,
But soon it subsides and disappears.
פ I humble thee, and I will humble thee not again,
13. Now I will break in pieces thy staff.
14. צ Jehovah hath given commandment concerning thee;
Thy name shall be remembered no more;
ק Thy grave I will make an object of disgust (?),
Graven and molten images I will cut off.
15. ר The feet of him that bringeth good tidings are upon the mountains;
Behold! He publisheth peace.
ii, 2. ש Jehovah restoreth the vine branch to Jacob,
Yea, he delighteth in the excellency of Israel
ת To compensate, because emptiers have emptied it,
They have destroyed its vine branches.

Nowack considers ii, 1, followed by ii, 3, the opening words of the genuine prophecy of Nahum; Marti considers i, 11, omitted by Nowack, the beginning of Nahum's prophecy. The result achieved by Nowack is a much smoother and "more poetic"

poem; but is there sufficient warrant for the liberties taken with the present Hebrew text?

The artificial character of acrostic poetry is generally supposed to point to a late date; hence those who believe that chapter i was originally an alphabetic poem consider it an exilic or postexilic production which was, at a still later date, prefixed to the genuine prophecies of Nahum. In support of this it is pointed out further that the prophecy in chapter i is vague, its historical background is not clearly defined, while the utterances in chapters ii, iii, are definite and to the point. The latter announce judgment upon an historical foe of Judah, but the poem speaks of a universal world judgment. "We find here an approach, on the one hand, to the manner of the didactic alphabetic songs of a later age, and, on the other, to that of certain eschatological and apocalyptic appendices by the insertion of which the framers of the prophetic canon sought to adapt other older prophetic books to the tastes of the readers of their own day." If sufficient evidence were found to deny the section to Nahum, the interpretation suggested by this quotation would seem quite possible; but is it really impossible to believe that chapter i proceeded from the prophet himself, and that he meant it to serve as a general introduction to the more specific denunciations in chapters ii, iii? Such introduction, emphasizing, as it does, the justice, majesty, and omnipotence of the One who has decreed the doom of Nineveh, would certainly add weight to the specific threats. But if chapter i is interpreted thus, one may discover, even in chapter i, frequent allusions to Nineveh and to events in the history of Judah and Assyria (for details see comments).

Some derive support for a late date also from the language and style of the poem. Gunkel, for example, finds a want of originality in language and style, and "many touches that betray connection not only with the Psalms but with late eschatological literature." Others see little force in the linguistic argument (compare Joel, p. 137), and a detailed exam-

ination shows that in this as in other cases the linguistic and stylistic data are indecisive.

That difficulties exist in chapter i, that in some respects it differs from chapters ii, iii, even the student of the English text can see, and that the Hebrew text has suffered in transmission is very probable. On the other hand, it is equally true that thus far no conclusive evidence has been discovered, and no convincing argument has been presented against the genuineness of i, 2—ii, 2; hence the question must still be regarded as undecided. "Therefore," says G. A. Smith, "while it is possible that a later poem has been prefixed to the genuine prophecies of Nahum, and the first chapter supplies many provocations to belief in such a theory, this has not been proved, and the able assays of proof have much against them. The question is open."

Contents, Outline, and Teaching.

1. *Contents.*—In the absence of conclusive proof to the contrary, the entire book may be treated here as a unit. The title (i, 1) names the author and his home, and the subject of his utterances.

The first section (i, 2-15, to which some add ii, 2) opens with a solemn proclamation of the twofold character of Jehovah; he is a God of vengeance and a God of mercy (2, 3). At times he may seem slack in punishing iniquity, but retribution will surely come; and when it does come, "who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his wrath is poured out like fire, and the rocks are broken asunder by him" (4-6). From the general description of the divine character and of the terrible manifestations of Jehovah's anger the prophet passes to the specific case in hand (see introductory remarks to i, 7ff.). This divine wrath is about to manifest itself in the overthrow of the enemies of the chosen people. The prophet affirms that Jehovah will be the stronghold of those who put their trust in him, but his enemies he will pursue into outer darkness (7, 8). Judah

had suffered so much, and in times past disappointments had been so many, that hope had given place to despair. To drive away the gloom of despair the prophet turns to the people (see on i, 9) with the question, Do you think that Jehovah cannot or will not carry out this threat against your present enemy? This is a grievous error, for he will surely bring utter destruction upon him (9, 10). In verse 11 he turns to Nineveh to make clear to her why her doom is decreed; she hath "devised evil against Jehovah." Once more glorious deliverance is promised to Judah (12, 13), followed by a reiteration of the decree against Assyria (14). Already the seer beholds the mighty foe fallen, and the messengers speeding over the mountains to tell the glad tidings in the holy city; he bids Judah to proclaim feasts of rejoicing and to pay the vows made in the days of adversity (15); for Jehovah is about to restore the excellency of Jacob (ii, 2).

The second utterance (ii, 1-12) deals almost exclusively with the assault upon Nineveh and the sack of the city. The avenger is approaching, and she must prepare for defense (1). The fall of the archenemy is necessary, in order that Jehovah may exalt his own people (2; see comment). There follows a vivid description of the hostile army and the furious charges of its chariots (3, 4). Desperate efforts are made to defend the city, but they are futile, and the city falls (5, 6). The queen and her companions are captured (7); in terror the people seek to escape (8); the city is sacked and left a desolate ruin (9, 10). The prophet gazing upon the ruins cries out exultantly, "Where is the den of the lions, and the feeding place of the young lions, where the lion and the lioness walked, the lion's whelp, and none made them afraid?" Jehovah has made an utter end thereof (11-13).

Once more (iii, 1) the prophet turns against Nineveh, and pronounces a woe upon the corrupt and bloody city (1). Surely she deserves judgment. Already the noise of the onslaught may be heard, and the glitter of the arms may be seen (2, 3). "Because of the multitude of the whoredoms of the

well-favored harlot" the anger of Jehovah is aroused (4). The part of a harlot she has acted, the fate of a harlot she must endure, and no one will bemoan her (5-7).

Nineveh may boast in her power and her strong defenses, but they will avail nothing. Was not No Amon in Egypt equally well protected? Yet she suffered inglorious defeat, and Nineveh can expect no better fate (8-11). Rapidly the enemy advances; the fortresses throughout the land fall readily before him; the soldiers have turned into weak and cowardly women (12, 13). A siege is imminent; preparations for it must be made, but all resistance is in vain; the city and its inhabitants will be utterly cut off (14-18). The downfall of Nineveh and Assyria is complete; and "all that hear the report of thee clap their hands over thee; for upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed continually?" (19).

2. *Outline.*—

TITLE—THE PROPHET AND THE SUBJECT OF HIS PROPHECY..Chap. i, 1

I. DECREE OF NINEVEH'S DOOM.....i, 2-15
1. Jehovah a God of vengeance and of mercy.....i, 2, 3
2. Terribleness of the divine anger.....i, 4-6
3. Overthrow of Nineveh; rejoicing in Zion.....i, 7-15
(1) Jehovah a stronghold of the faithful....i, 7
(2) Jehovah the pursuer of his enemies.....i, 8
(3) Jehovah will not fail his people in the present crisis.....i, 9, 10
(4) Justification of the decree against Nineveh.. .....i, 11
(5) Deliverance of Judah.....i, 12, 13
(6) Destruction of Assyria.....i, 14
(7) Rejoicing in Mount Zion.....i, 15

II. SIEGE AND DESTRUCTION OF NINEVEH.....ii, 1-13
1. Assault upon Nineveh; sack of the city.....ii, 1-10
(1) Approach of the enemy.....ii, 1
(2) Humiliation of Nineveh a preparation for the exaltation of Judah.....ii, 2
(3) Furious onslaught of the hostile army..ii, 3, 4
(4) Hopelessness of resistance.....ii, 5, 6

(5) Capture of the queen and her attendants..ii, 7
(6) Flight of the people.....ii, 8
(7) Sack of the city.....ii, 9, 10
2. Exultation of the prophet over the city's destruction..
.....ii, 11-13
III. NINEVEH'S VICES AND INEVITABLE DOOM.....iii, 1-19
1. Her doom the just retribution for her outrages against other nations.....iii, 1-7
(1) Woe upon the corrupt and bloody city..iii, 1
(2) The clatter of the chariots; the glitter of the arms.....iii, 2, 3
(3) No one will pity her in her distress...iii, 4-7
2. The fate of No Amon to be the fate of Nineveh..iii, 8-11
3. Inability of her resources to save her.....iii, 12-19
(1) Fall of the outlying strongholds....iii, 12, 13
(2) Siege and destruction of the city...iii, 14-19a
(3) Universal exultation over the fall of Nineveh.....iii, 19b

3. *Teaching*—The utterances of Nahum center around one single theme, the destruction of Nineveh. As a result they contain little direct religious teaching; and what there is of it is confined very largely to the opening verses of chapter i. These verses emphasize the twofold manifestation of the divine holiness, the divine vengeance and the divine mercy (i, 2, 3). The manifestation of the one results in the destruction of the wicked (i, 2), the other in the salvation of the oppressed (i, 15; ii, 2). Faith in Jehovah will secure the divine favor and protection (i, 7).

In one respect Nahum differs widely from his predecessors, namely, in his silence concerning the sin and guilt of Judah. The other prophets point to the present or impending distress and affliction of the people as brought upon them by their sin, and they insist that salvation can be theirs only if they repent and turn to Jehovah. "For this Nahum had no thought. His heart, for all its bigness, holds room only for the bitter memories, the baffled hopes, the unappeased hatreds of a hundred years." This silence concerning the sin and guilt of his own

nation is not due to the lack of high ethical ideals or to ignorance of the people's moral condition, but rather to the narrowness of the prophet's purpose in delivering the message. His purpose was to point out the hand of God in the impending doom of Nineveh and the significance of the catastrophe for the oppressed Jews. To do this it was not necessary to dwell upon the shortcomings of his people. The fierceness of Nahum, and his glee at the thought of Nineveh's ruin, may not be in accord with the injunction, "Love thine enemy," but it should be borne in mind that it is not personal hatred that prompts the prophet; he is stirred by a righteous indignation over the outrages committed by Assyria. He considers the sin and overthrow of Nineveh not merely in their bearing upon the fortunes of Judah, but in their relation to the divine moral government of the whole world; hence his voice gives utterance to the outraged conscience of humanity. Thus, while Nahum's message, in its direct teaching, appears to be less spiritual and ethical than that of his predecessors, it sets in a very clear light Jehovah's sway over the whole universe; and it emphasizes the duty of the nations as well as of individuals to own his sway and obey his will. This attitude alone will assure permanent peace and prosperity; on the other hand, disobedience to his purpose and disregard of his rule will surely bring calamity and distress. The emphasis upon these ethical principles gives to the message of Nahum a unique significance for the present day and generation. "Assyria in his hands," says Kennedy, "becomes an object lesson to the empires of the modern world, teaching, as an eternal principle of the divine government of the world, the absolute necessity, for a nation's continued vitality, of that righteousness, personal, civic, and national, which alone exalteth a nation."

In a broad sense, i, 15, is of Messianic import. The downfall of Nineveh and Assyria prepares the way for the permanent redemption and exaltation of Zion; "the wicked one shall no more pass through thee."

A word should be added concerning the diction and style

of Nahum. Opinions concerning the religious significance of the Book of Nahum may differ, but from the standpoint of language and style all students assign to Nahum an exalted place among the prophet-poets of the ancient Hebrews; for all are impressed with the intense force and picturesqueness of his language and style. "Each prophet," says Kirkpatrick, "had his special gift for his particular work. Nahum bears the palm for poetic power. His short book is a Pindaric ode of triumph over the oppressor's fall." So also G. A. Smith: "His language is strong and brilliant; his rhythm rumbles and rolls, leaps and flashes, like the horsemen and chariots he describes."

NAHUM.

THE CHAPTER I.
burden [a]of Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite. 2 [1]God *is* [b]jealous,

[a] Zeph. 2. 13.—[1] Or, *The LORD* is *a jealous God, and a revenger*, etc.

[b] Exod. 20. 5; 34. 14; Deut. 4.24; Josh. 24. 19.

CHAPTER I.

1. *The title.* The first part names the subject of the prophecy. **Burden of Nineveh**—Better, with R. V. margin, "oracle concerning Nineveh" (compare Isa. xiii, 1; Zech. ix, 1). The noun is derived from a verb "to lift up," that is, the voice, or "to take up," that is, a parable or speech (Num. xxiv, 3; Jer. vii, 16), hence "utterance" or "oracle." The second part names the author and his home. **Nahum the Elkoshite**—See Introduction, pp. 426ff. **Vision**—Primarily this noun denoted only those revelations which were received in visions or trances (Gen. xv, 1; Ezek. xi, 24), but it underwent a process of generalization, so that it came to denote revelations of every kind, whatever the method by which they were received. Finally it came to be used—so here—in the headings of the prophetic books (compare Isa. i, 1; ii, 1; Obad. 1) as a collective noun in the sense of "prophetic utterances." Concerning the origin of this twofold title A. B. Davidson says that the first part "is probably due to the editor of the book, as the phrase is common in introducing prophecies. . . . The other part . . . may very well have come from the prophet himself."

DECREE OF NINEVEH'S DOOM, 2–15 (+ii, 2?).

Chapter i, 2–15 (+ii, 2?) contains the first section of the Book of Nahum. On its originality and poetic form see pp. 432ff. It opens with a sublime description of Jehovah as a God jealous and merciful, the avenger of evil, at whose appearance no one can stand; even heaven and earth tremble (2–6). In verse 7 the prophet turns to his specific theme, and shows what bearing these phases of the divine character have upon the future history of Judah and of Nineveh. Jehovah will be faithful toward those who rely upon him (verse 7), but woe unto his enemies (8). The destruction of the chief of these is already decreed: Nineveh must fall, and her downfall will bring deliverance and rejoicing to Judah (9–15).

Divine manifestations and their effects, 2–6.

These verses serve a twofold purpose: 1. They bring the judgment upon Nineveh, which is announced in the rest of the book, into connection with the universal purpose and providence of Jehovah; 2. They remove all doubt concerning the possibility of the execution of the threat.

The entire book deals with the manifestations of the divine wrath against the enemies of Jehovah and of the people of Jehovah. These manifestations are not due to arbitrary decisions on his part; they are the inevitable outgrowth of his character; he cannot rest until sin and wickedness, and all who represent these, are swept away. To emphasize this side of the divine character is the purpose of verses 2, 3. For the sake of greater emphasis the divine name is mentioned three times, as also the fact of the divine vengeance; and the intensity of the divine emotions is brought out in a climax—*jealous, furious, preserveth wrath.* Like other prophets seeking to describe the divine attributes, Nahum is compelled to resort to very bold anthropomorphisms. **Jealous**—See on Joel ii, 18.

and [c]the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and [2]*is* furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth *wrath* for his enemies. 3 The LORD *is* [d]slow to anger, and [c]great in power,

[c] Deut. 32. 35; Psa. 94. 1; Isa. 59. 18. —[2] Heb. *that hath fury.*—[d] Exod. 34. 6, 7; Neh. 9. 17; Psa. 103. 8; Jonah 4. 2.—

and will not at all acquit *the wicked:* [f]the LORD *hath* his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds *are* the dust of his feet. 4 [g]He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the rivers:

[e] Job 9. 4.—[f] Psa. 18. 7, etc.; 97. 2.—[f] Hab. 3. 5, 11, 12.—[g] Psa. 106. 9; Isa. 50. 2; Matt. 8. 26.

Revengeth—Better, R. V., "avengeth." Jehovah must vindicate himself and his character, he must show himself holy; hence he is bound to avenge all wrongdoing, and to sweep away all who seek to prevent the carrying out of his holy purpose. Applied to the case in hand, he must destroy the Assyrians, who, through ill treatment accorded to the chosen people, have proved themselves his own enemies. **Furious**—R. V., "full of wrath"; literally, *possessor of wrath.* The divine wrath may be defined as "an energy of the divine nature called forth by the presence of daring or presumptuous transgression, and expressing the reaction of the divine holiness against it, in the punishment or destruction of the transgressor." The divine wrath, jealousy, and vengeance, all express essentially the same idea (see further A. B. Davidson, *The Theology of the Old Testament,* 318ff.).

3. While punishment is sure to come, sometimes it is delayed. **Slow to anger**—Or, *long-suffering.* He delays the execution of judgment to give the sinner an opportunity to repent (Exod. xxxiv, 6). **Great in power**—The relation of this clause to its context is uncertain. Some understand it of power of compassion and magnanimity. If this is correct it goes with the preceding, the thought being, "Jehovah is slow to anger and great in power of compassion; nevertheless, he will by no means acquit the wicked." The postponement of the punishment must not be taken as an indication of weak indulgence. A comparison with Exod. xxxiv, 6, 7; Joel ii, 13, leads Nowack to change "power" into "loving-kindness." Others take "power" in the sense of power to accomplish a thing, or ability to execute judgment; "Jehovah is, indeed, slow to anger, but he is also great in power, and will by no means acquit the wicked." Either interpretation gives good sense. **Acquit the wicked**—R. V., "clear the guilty." "Wicked" or "guilty" is not in the original. The verb is used absolutely, since the context makes it plain who will not be acquitted or left unpunished (Exod. xxxiv, 7).

From the description of the divine character the prophet passes to a description of the manifestations of the divine wrath. The appearance of Jehovah in judgment is pictured, as frequently, in the imagery of a fierce thunderstorm. **Jehovah hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm**—A picture of the terribleness of his coming. No wonder his enemies will be thrown into confusion (compare Mic. i, 3, 4; Psa. xviii, 7ff.). **Clouds are the dust of his feet**—As he advances in the storm he treads upon the clouds as if they were nothing more than the dust of the street. Nowack's change, "clouds and dust are at his feet," is a weak emendation in this highly poetic passage. In the alphabetic arrangement of the same author 3a is placed after 9a, which is followed by 2c, d (see p. 435).

4, 5. **He rebuketh the sea**—By the blast of the whirlwind (verse 3) he rebukes the sea, and in terror it dries up (compare Psa. xviii, 15). There may be an allusion to the dividing of the Red Sea (Exod. xiv, 21; compare Psa. cvi, 9), and of the Jordan (Josh. iii, 17). **Drieth up all the rivers**—Either in the same manner or, as the following clauses make probable, by means of drought, which was always

[h]Bashan languisheth, and Carmel, and the flower of Lebanon languisheth. 5 [i]The mountains quake at him, and [k]the hills melt, and [l]the earth is burned at his presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein.

[h] Isa. 33. 9.—[i] Psa. 68. 8.—[k] Judg. 5. 5; Psa. 97. 5; Mic. 1. 4.—[l] 2 Pet. 3. 10. —[m] Mal. 3. 2.

6 Who can stand before his indignation? and [m]who can [3]abide in the fierceness of his anger? [n]his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him. 7 [o]The LORD *is* good, a [4]strong hold in the

[3] Heb. *stand up.*—[n] Rev. 16. 1.—[o] 1 Chron. 16. 34; Psa. 100. 5; Jer. 33. 11; Lam. 3. 25.—[4] Or, *strength.*

considered an expression of the divine wrath (Joel i, 20; 1 Kings xvii, 7). For 4b compare Amos i, 2. **Bashan**—See on Amos iv, 1. **Carmel**—See on Amos i, 2; ix, 3. **Flower of Lebanon**—See "his smell as Lebanon" (Hos. xiv, 6). **Languisheth**—The same word is used in Joel i, 10, 12 (see there). **The mountains quake at him**—Literally, *from him.* The power that makes them quake proceeds from Jehovah. The imagery of verse 3 is continued; when the mountains hear the roar of the thunder they tremble in terror (Mic. i, 3, 4; Judg. v, 4; Hab. iii, 6). **The hills melt**—The thunderstorm is accompanied by heavy rainfall; the water rushes down the hills in such torrents that it looks as if the hills themselves are melting (Mic. i, 4; Judg. v, 5). **The earth is burned at his presence**—R. V., "upheaved." The translation of A. V. follows late Jewish authorities; it derives no support from the Old Testament usage of the verb; that of the R. V. also is not without difficulties. Literally, *the earth lifts up.* To secure the meaning "is upheaved" or "lifts itself up," the verb form needs to be changed. If that is done the reference will be to the terror produced by the terrible manifestation of Jehovah. The earth seems to start up and tremble when it hears the thunder (Psa. xxix, 8; a different picture is in Amos ix, 5). Some commentators trace the verb to a different root and give to it a different meaning; Nowack renders, "becomes waste"; Marti, "roars." **The world**—The habitable portion of the earth. **All that dwell therein**—Man and all other living creatures. A common Old Testament expression (Psa. xxiv, 1; xcviii, 7).

6. In the face of these terrible manifestations of Jehovah, which may be likened to devouring fire (Deut. iv, 24), and which break asunder the rocks (Jer. xxiii, 29), no human being can stand. **Poured out like fire**—The divine wrath in its destructiveness is often likened to a stream of fire (Jer. vii, 20; Isa. xxx, 33; 2 Chron. xxxiv, 25). **Thrown down**—R. V., "broken asunder." A very slight alteration would give "are kindled," which, in the light of the parallel clause, seems preferable.

Overthrow of Nineveh; deliverance of Judah, 7–15.

In i, 7–15, the prophet applies the general truths expressed in i, 2–6, to the case in hand. The divine wrath will manifest itself in the overthrow of the enemies of God's people, chief among whom is Assyria, with its capital, Nineveh. With this power out of the way, the excellence of Judah may be restored. Verses 7, 8 are still, in a sense, introductory; they affirm in general terms the fact that Jehovah is the stronghold of those who put their trust in him, and, on the other hand, that he "pursues his enemies into darkness."

7. **Jehovah is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble**—LXX., "Good is the Lord to those who trust in him in the day of trouble," which gives a sentence parallel in thought to the one following. Nowack and others think that neither the present Hebrew text nor LXX. has preserved the original; he reconstructs 7a, partly to secure his alphabetic arrangement, "Good is Jehovah to those who trust in him, a stronghold in the day of trouble." **Stronghold**—A place of defense, of

day of trouble; and [p]he knoweth them that trust in him. 8 [q]But with an overrunning flood he will make an utter end of the place thereof, and darkness shall pursue his enemies. 9 [r]What do ye imagine against the LORD? [s]he will make an utter end: affliction shall not [r]rise up

[p] Psa. 1. 6; 2 Tim. 2. 19.—[q] Dan. 9. 26; 11. 10, 22, 40.

[r] Psa. 2. 1.—[s] 1 Sam. 3. 12.

shelter. Whatever the exact wording of the original, the sense is that Jehovah cares for those who put their trust in him even in the hour of deepest distress (Psa. xxxvii, 39). Hence Judah, though oppressed, need not despair. **He knoweth**—See on Hos. viii, 4. Here in a favorable sense, "care," "guide" (Hos. xiii, 5; Psa. i, 6). "God is said to know them who hope in him, because he always watches over them, and takes care of their safety; in short, this knowledge is nothing else but the care of God, or his providence in preserving the faithful" (Calvin).

8. Toward his enemies he manifests a darker side. **Make an utter end of the place thereof**—Literally, *he will make her place a full end.* The pronoun can refer only to Nineveh, but in the absence of a previous naming of the city in the address proper—the mention in the heading is not sufficient—the use of the pronoun is strange. LXX. and other ancient versions read, instead of "of the place thereof," "of those who rise up against him," equivalent to "his adversaries," which gives a good parallel to the succeeding clause, and is probably to be accepted as original. If the present text is retained the destruction of Nineveh is announced. The personified Nineveh (compare iii, 4) is distinguished from her city; the latter Jehovah will sweep away. **An overrunning flood**—A picture of the resistless power of Jehovah or of the unchecked advance of the divinely appointed executioner (compare Isa. viii, 8; xxviii, 15). **Darkness shall pursue his enemies**—R. V., "he will pursue his enemies into darkness." Darkness symbolizes calamity and despair. The ancient versions agree with A. V. in taking "darkness" as the subject, and this is perhaps preferable.

The English translations interpret verses 9, 10 as addressed to the enemies of Jehovah (verse 8). These are, if chapter i is a part of Nahum's utterances, the Assyrians, represented throughout the book by their capital city, Nineveh. However, it is possible to understand the words as addressed to Judah, intended to comfort the nation in its present distress. If so, the translation must be changed (see below). **What do ye imagine** ["devise"] **against Jehovah**—In anger Jehovah asks the Assyrians what are their unrighteous schemes against him (compare Hos. vii, 15), or against his people. They will not be able to carry them out, for he will utterly destroy them (compare Isa. vii, 5–7). If Judah is addressed the words must be translated, "What think ye of Jehovah?" In verse 11, where the translation is rightly "imagine against," a different construction is used in the original. The question addressed to the anxious and oppressed Jews, would mean, Do you think that Jehovah cannot or will not deliver you from your present enemies, that in the present crisis he will fail to carry out the threat of verse 8? Reassurance is given in 9b, 10. He will indeed make a full end of them. **Affliction**—If addressed to Nineveh the noun is used in the sense of "judgment," a rather uncommon usage; if addressed to Judah the usual meaning is retained. **The second time**—If addressed to Nineveh the thought is that the blow about to be dealt will be sufficient to annihilate; a second judgment is not needed (1 Sam. xxvi, 8). If addressed to Judah, it becomes a promise that the present deliverance will be permanent. Once Jehovah permitted Judah to be afflicted—by Sennacherib; he will not do it again.

the second time. **10** For while *they be* folden together [t]*as* thorns, [u]and while they are drunken *as* drunkards, [x]they shall be devoured as stubble fully dry. **11** There is *one* come out of thee, [y]that imagineth evil against the LORD, [5]a wicked counselor. **12** Thus saith the LORD; [6]Though *they be* quiet, and likewise many, yet thus [z]shall they be [7]cut

[t] 2 Sam. 23. 6, 7.—[u] Chap. 3. 11.—[x] Mal. 4. 1.—[y] 2 Kings 19. 22, 23.—[5] Heb. *a counselor of Belial.*—[6] Or, *If* they would have been *at peace, so* should they have been *many, and so should they have been shorn, and he should have passed away.*—[z] 2 Kings 19. 35, 37.—[7] Heb. *shorn.*

Verse 10 is obscure. It seems best, however, to consider it the continuation of the threat of judgment upon Jehovah's enemies. With one interpretation of verse 9 it becomes principally a threat against Assyria; with the other, a message of comfort for Judah. The translation of R. V., which differs considerably from that of A. V., is to be preferred: "For entangled like thorns, and drunken as with their drink, they are consumed utterly as dry stubble." A more satisfactory connection with verse 9 would be established if the first conjunction could be rendered "though." **Entangled like thorns** (R. V.)—Though the Ninevites were apparently unassailable, because surrounded with defenses as with impenetrable thorn hedges, and though, like these, they could inflict injury upon anyone approaching them, they will be unable to withstand the fierce anger of Jehovah. **Drunken as with their drink** (R. V.)—Though the thorn hedge would be so soaked with water that ordinary fire could not harm it, the fire of Jehovah will be effective. If this is the meaning, instead of "drunken" we should read "wet" or "wetted." "As with their drink" may be an allusion to the excesses and revelry of the Assyrian court. It is not easy to get the above-suggested meaning from the present Hebrew text; besides, A. B. Davidson suggests, not without reason, "a witticism of this sort is altogether improbable." It is quite possible that the Hebrew has suffered in transmission. The ancient versions do not relieve the difficulty. **As dry stubble** (R. V.)—Which is readily consumed (Isa. v, 24). For Nowack's emendation see p. 435; similarly Marti.

In verses 9–15 the persons addressed seem to change very frequently, without any indication of the fact in the Hebrew. Verses 9, 10 seem to be addressed to Judah; 11, to Nineveh; 12, 13, to Judah; 14, to Assyria; 15, to Judah; ii, 1, to Assyria; ii, 2, to Judah; ii, 3ff., to Nineveh. Such frequent changes are unusual, but only sweeping emendations, otherwise unnecessary, can remove the peculiarity (compare Nowack's emendations, p. 435). Verse 11 seems to be addressed to Nineveh; she deserves the destruction decreed by Jehovah, because she has devised evil against him. **There is one come out of thee**—Perhaps an allusion to Sennacherib, who devised evil against Jehovah, against his sanctuary, and against his city (Isa. x, 5–15; xxxvi, 14–20); but the prophet may think also of other hostile acts of the Assyrians against the people of Jehovah. Jehovah must vindicate himself against any attempt to discredit his supremacy.

If the Hebrew of verse 12, which, like that of verse 10, is peculiar and obscure, is correct, R. V. gives a more satisfactory rendering than A. V.: "Though they may be in full strength, and likewise many, even so shall they be cut down, and he shall pass away. Though I have afflicted thee, I will afflict thee no more." Even the ancient translators found this verse obscure, and they greatly differ from one another in their reproductions of the same. The words seem to be addressed to Judah concerning the dreaded foe, the Assyrian. **In full strength**—Literally, *intact.* Though they may use all their marvelous resources. **Likewise many**—Their numbers are great. Isaiah likens them to a swarm of bees (Isa. vii, 18). **Even so**—In spite of their unlimited re-

down, when he shall [a]pass through. Though I have afflicted thee, I will afflict thee no more. **13** For now will I [b]break his yoke from off thee, and will burst thy bonds in sunder. **14** And the LORD hath given a commandment concerning thee, *that* no more of thy name be sown: out of the house of thy gods will I cut off the graven image and the molten image: [c]I will make thy grave; for thou art vile. **15** Behold [d]upon the

[a] Isa. 8. 8; Dan. 11. 10.—[b] Jer. 2. 20; 30. 8.

[c] 2 Kings 19. 37.—[d] Isa. 52. 7; Rom. 10. 15.

sources and great numbers. **Cut down**—The verb is "used elsewhere only of shearing sheep or the hair of the head"; the noun derived from the same root is used also of the mowing of grass (Psa. lxxii, 6; compare Amos vii, 1). Either the prophet changes the figure and thinks of the armies spread out like a meadow ready to be mowed, or he generalizes the meaning of the verb. If the latter, he may be thinking of slaughter by the sword or the cutting down of a thorn hedge (verse 11). **He shall pass away**—LXX. reads the plural "they," and this is preferable, unless we assume that the author used the singular purposely, to express the idea that the mighty army will vanish like a single individual. For Nowack's reconstruction of 12a see p. 435.

Though I have afflicted thee—During the Assyrian supremacy. The end is now in sight; Jehovah will not again afflict his people. Another possible rendering is suggested in margin R. V., "So will I afflict thee, that I shall afflict thee no more." This would compel us to understand the words as a threat addressed to Nineveh. There will be but one blow; it will be sufficient to annihilate; a second one will not be needed. If the present text of verse 13 is retained the first interpretation is to be preferred. As verse 13 stands at present (compare Nowack, p. 435), it states how the humiliation is to be brought to an end. **Break his yoke . . . thy bonds**—Jehovah will break the yoke which Assyria has laid upon Judah; he will burst asunder the bonds which hold Judah in the power of the enemy (compare Isa. x, 27; Jer. xxx, 8; Ezek. xxxiv, 27; Psa. ii, 3)

Verse 14 is addressed to Assyria or Nineveh in the person of their king. Their utter annihilation has been decreed by Jehovah. **No more of thy name be sown**—If understood of the king himself it means that his family will die out; his name will not be perpetuated in his children. It is better, however, to understand it of the city or state; its name and renown will no longer be heralded over the world, for it will be completely destroyed. The expression is peculiar, and Nowack reads, "No more shall thy name be remembered," which, while retaining the same idea, is smoother; the very names of Assyria and Nineveh will be forgotten. In the general upheaval the idols will be cut off. **Graven image**—See on Mic. v, 13. **Molten image**—Images of metal, made by running melted metal into a mold. The two combined denote, in this passage, all kinds of idolatrous images (Deut. xxvii, 15). **I will make thy grave**—I will prepare a grave for thee; a threat which implies the destruction or death of the one against whom the threat is uttered. Peshitto, "I will turn it ("the house of thy gods") into thy grave" (similarly Targum). **For thou art vile**—Or, *thou art light.* He has been weighed and found wanting (Dan. v, 27), hence he will be cast away. With the common rendering the idea is that his measure of iniquity is full, hence he must die. Bickell unites what are the last two clauses into one, by reading for the last two words in Hebrew, a single word, and translates, "I will make thy graves into dunghills," that is, objects of loathing and disgust. The noun which he translates "dunghills" occurs nowhere else in the Old Testament, but a similar word is found in Hab. ii, 16, and the above meaning may be estab-

mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace! O Judah, [8]keep thy solemn feasts, perform thy vows: for [9] [e]the wicked shall no more pass through thee; [f]he is utterly cut off.

[8] Heb. *feast.*—[9] Heb. *Belial.*—[e] Verses 11, 12.—[f] Verse 14.

lished from the Aramaic. That there is some corruption of the text is quite possible, but it may be questioned whether Bickell has furnished the right solution (for Nowack's emendation see p. 435).

15. The destruction of the Assyrian will mean the exaltation of Judah. The prophet sees the messenger speeding over the mountains to tell the glad news to the hitherto oppressed people. He bids Judah to behold the messenger, to proclaim joyous feasts, and to pay to Jehovah the vows made in adversity. A very sublime passage. **Upon the mountains**—Of Judah. He is hastening toward the holy city; and from the mountain tops he proclaims the good tidings that they may be heard far and wide. **Keep thy . . . feasts**—Or, *pilgrimages* (see on Hos. ii, 11). During the period of oppression these could not be kept properly; now they may be resumed with rejoicing. **Perform thy vows**—Those made in the days of adversity. Now they may be paid, for permanent deliverance has come. **The wicked** ["one"]—Literally, *wickedness*, or *worthlessness* (verse 11). Assyria, in the person of the king, is wickedness personified. He can no longer disturb the peace of Jerusalem for he is cut off forever.

CHAPTER II.

Siege and Destruction of Nineveh; Sack of the City, 1–10.

From the declaration that the doom of Nineveh is decreed the prophet passes to a description of the carrying out of the decree. The army that is ordained to execute the judgment is already approaching (1); in imagination the prophet beholds its terrible

CHAPTER II.

HE [1] [a]that dasheth in pieces is come up before thy face: [b]keep the munition, watch the way, make *thy* loins strong, fortify *thy* power mightily. 2 [c]For the LORD hath

[1] Or, *The disperser*, or, *hammer.*—[a] Jer. 50. 23.—[b] Jer. 51. 11, 12; chap. 3. 14.—[c] Isa. 10. 12; Jer. 25. 29.

attacks against the city, the glittering weapons, the raging chariots (3, 4). Desperate efforts are made to save the city, but in vain, and it falls (5, 6); the queen and her attendants are captured (7); the inhabitants flee (8); the city is sacked and left a desolation (9, 10).

Verse 1 is addressed, like i, 14, to Assyria—Nineveh. **He that dasheth in pieces**—Literally, *he that scatters.* Translated in Prov. xxv, 18, "maul"; a similar word, which some think should be read here, is translated in Jer. li, 20, "battle-axe." The city is exhorted to prepare for the struggle. **Keep the munition**—R. V., "fortress"; better, *fortification*, the wall around the city. This is to be guarded, lest it fall into the hands of the enemy Some render simply "keep watch." **Watch the way**—By which the enemy approaches, so as to guard against disastrous surprises. **Make thy loins strong**—Perhaps equivalent to *gird thy loins*, that is, prepare for vigorous action (compare Isa. v, 27). **Fortify thy power mightily**—Collect all thy power and resources; equivalent to *strain every nerve.*

In verse 2 the translation of R. V. is undoubtedly to be preferred: "For Jehovah restoreth the excellency of Jacob, as the excellency of Israel; for the emptiers have emptied them out, and destroyed their vine branches." The verse is taken by some as the continuation of i, 15, while ii, 3, is thought to be the continuation of ii, 1. This transposition would greatly improve the development of the thought; and the only serious objection to it is that ii, 2, would be a weak conclusion of the first section of the book. In

turned away [2]the excellency of Jacob, as the excellency of Israel: for [d]the emptiers have emptied them out, and marred their vine branches.

[2] Or, *the pride of Jacob as the pride of Israel.*

3 The shield of his mighty men is made [e]red, the valiant men *are* [3]in scarlet: the chariots *shall be* with [4]flaming torches in the day of his

[d] Psa. 80. 12; Hos. 10. 1.—[e] Isa. 63. 2, 3. —[3] Or, *dyed scarlet.*—[4] Or, *fiery torches.*

either case the thought remains essentially the same. If left in its present position, verse 2 explains why Nineveh must be destroyed: to clear the way for the exaltation of Judah; if it is placed after i, 15, it explains why Judah is exhorted to rejoice: because the excellency of Judah is about to be restored. Instead of "as the excellency of Israel" we should read "and the excellency of Israel." **Jacob, . . . Israel**—Synonyms, both referring to the southern kingdom, which was the only one in existence in the days of Nahum. **Excellency**—The nation, at present oppressed and afflicted, will be restored to the position of glory and splendor enjoyed in the days of David. This restoration must be accomplished by Jehovah, for the nation is in a hopeless condition. **The emptiers**—The enemies who at various times plundered and desolated Judah; the chief among these were the Assyrians. **Marred** ["destroyed"] **their vine branches**—Judah is likened here to a vineyard, or, perhaps better, to a vine, whose branches have been ruthlessly destroyed (compare Isa. v, 1–7; Jer. xii, 10).

In verses 3ff. (continuing verse 1) the prophet describes the attack of the besieging army. **His mighty men**—The soldiers of the hostile army are preparing for attack. **The shield . . . is made red**—Since this is still "in the day of his preparation," that is, before the attack and battle, the red cannot be caused by the blood of the slain; it must be some color other than blood reflected by the shields. Some connect this passage with Josephus, *Antiquities,* xiii, 12, 5, which mentions "shields of brass (copper)" and "shields covered with brass"; these shields are said in 1 Macc. vi, 39, to blaze in the sunlight "like torches of fire." On the other hand, there may be an allusion to the custom of "anointing" shields (Isa. xxi, 5), which in some cases may have taken the form of coloring them. **In scarlet**—Again, not a reference to blood, but to the scarlet color of the uniforms (Ezek. xxiii, 14). **The chariots shall be with flaming torches**—R. V., "the chariots flash with steel"; literally, *with fire of steel are the chariots.* An obscure expression. The word *pelādhōth,* rendered "steel" in R. V., is rendered "torches" in A. V. (compare verse 4, where the Hebrew has *lappîdhîm*); in order to get such meaning here, a transposition of the consonants must be assumed. The translation "steel" is based upon the meaning of a similar Arabic word, but in the latter language the noun seems to be a loan word from the Persian; if so, we would hardly expect to find it in Hebrew in the time of Nahum. A third translation, based upon the similarity of the noun with an Arabic verb, "to cut," is "scythes." This translation is made improbable by the fact that chariots furnished with scythes appear to be a later invention. Tradition ascribes the invention to Cyrus, and they are referred to for the first time in connection with the battle of Cunaxa (*Anabasis,* i, 8, 10); in Jewish literature they are first mentioned in 2 Macc. xiii, 2. From the same root "cut" there is derived the meaning "divide"; here, "fire which divides itself," that is, flashing fire. This meaning also is doubtful. Jeremias has suggested that the word may refer to the steel coverings of Assyrian chariots or of machines used in attacks upon the walls. Following this suggestion, Cheyne proposes to change the word into *ḥallōpheth,* the Assyrian *ḥalluptu,* meaning "cover-

preparation, and the fir trees shall be terribly shaken. 4 The chariots shall rage in the streets, they shall jostle one against another in the broad ways: [5]they shall seem like torches, they shall run like the lightnings. 5 He shall recount his [6]worthies: they shall stumble in their walk; they shall make haste to the wall thereof, and the [7]defense

[5] Heb. *their show.*—[6] Or, *gallants.*

[7] Heb. *covering*, or, *coverer.*

ing." Whether the alteration is made or not, it is quite likely that Jeremias's suggestion is correct. The text becomes smoother if "with fire" is changed into "like fire," so that the entire clause reads, "like fire are the steel coverings of the chariots." **Day of his preparation**—The attack is not yet in progress. **Fir trees**—Better, R. V., "cypress spears." **Terribly shaken**—The verb occurs only here in the Old Testament, but the cognate languages establish the meaning "to move tremblingly," "to reel." Here the reference is to the swinging of the spears by the excited warriors. LXX. and Peshitto read "horsemen" or "horses," and in view of the peculiar expression "fir trees" in the sense of *spears made of fir or cypress wood* many consider that the original; if so, the verb refers to the restless movements of the cavalry.

Verse 4 describes the furious charge. **The chariots**—Of the attacking army. **Shall rage**—Better, R. V., "rage." It is a description of something present to the mental vision of the prophet. The verb means "to behave foolishly," "to rave"; here it is used of mad driving (Jer. xlvi, 9; compare 2 Kings ix, 20), parallel to and synonymous with "rush to and fro" in the next clause. **In the streets . . . broad ways**—Or, *places.* Not the streets and open places within the city, but those outside the city walls, where the battle rages The defenders try to prevent the besiegers from getting inside. **Torches**—As the steel-covered chariots race to and fro in the light of the sun they look like flaming torches. **Like the lightnings**—With lightning-like rapidity they speed from place to place, driving back or treading down the defenders.

Verse 6 continues the description of the attack; hence we would expect verse 5 also to refer to actions of the attacking army; so Nowack and others. But, as the text reads now, unexpected as the transition may be, it is more natural to understand verse 5 as describing the defensive measures taken by the king of Nineveh. As in verse 4 the tense should be reproduced by the present. **Recount his worthies**—Better, R. V., "remembereth his nobles." "The Assyrian monarch, surprised in his careless carousing, arouses himself and calls on his nobles (iii, 18) to rush to the walls, to drive back the enemy already thundering at the gates." **Stumble in their walk**—As a result of debauchery or of the prolonged siege, which has exhausted their strength. Though the siege of Nineveh lasted about two years, the prophet condenses the long struggle in a few vivid pictures of the final attack. Weary and worn, as they are, they make all possible haste. **Defense shall be prepared**—R. V., "the mantelet is prepared." The meaning of the word translated "defense" or "mantelet" is uncertain. Heb. *sôkhēkh;* literally, *coverer.* It is probably a technical military term; as such it may be applied to a body of soldiers ordered to cover or protect the city, or to a roof or some other arrangement that covers, and thus protects, soldiers. In this case the latter is more probable. "City walls were usually provided with turrets or battlements projecting forward over the walls, from which the besieged could observe the movements of the enemies at the foot, and hurl destructive missiles upon them." Such coverings are prepared hastily by the defenders.

Those who interpret verse 5, or at least 5b, as describing the offensive measures must give a different mean-

shall be prepared. 6 The gates of the rivers shall be opened, and the palace shall be [8]dissolved. 7 And [9]Huzzab shall be [10]led away cap-

[8] Or, *molten.*—[9] Or, *that which was established,* or, *there was a stand made.*

[10] Or, *discovered.*

ing to the term; they take it to denote a cover erected for the purpose of protecting the soldiers who attack the walls from the outside. "They (the defenders)," says Von Orelli, "reel to the wall, where the *storming cover* of the besiegers is already erected; and so the best chance of resistance is already lost." Jeremias, on the other hand, has suggested that it may denote the "covering" attached to battering rams, which protects the soldiers directing the attack, and even the battering ram itself (compare *Beitraege zur Assyriologie*, iii, i, 101, 178ff.) If this suggestion is correct the thought is that when the nobles reach the walls they discover that the enemy is already approaching with his battering machines. The interpretations of Von Orelli and of Jeremias-Billerbeck give good sense, but, as the text stands now, the interpretation which takes the entire verse as a description of the defensive measures is to be preferred.

6. The defensive measures prove ineffective; the city is taken. **The gates of the rivers shall be** ["are"] **opened**—The rivers are the Tigris, the Choser, and the canals supplied with water chiefly from these. Nineveh was located on the east side of the Tigris. It was surrounded by walls, and these were protected by moats. The city was cut into two parts by the river Choser, which emptied into the Tigris. The water supply for the moats as well as for general use came from these rivers, and from streams and canals that came from the hills in the northeast. The "gates of the rivers" are the points in the city walls where the streams or canals enter the city. With these gates would be connected sluices by which the flow of water might be regulated. The indiscriminate or malicious opening of the sluices would set the water free and cause the undermining of the walls and the inundation of the city. Some think, with less probability, that the reference is to the opening of the sluices of the moats, permitting the water to run out, and thus enabling the attacking army to cross the moats dry shod. If the latter were the thought the reference would be expected to precede the description of the attack upon the city wall itself, since the moats were some distance from the walls. The succeeding expression also favors the former interpretation. **The palace shall be** ["is"] **dissolved**—Might be understood literally, since the buildings in whose erection sun-dried bricks were used would easily be dissolved by the overflowing water; but a more general interpretation is equally permissible: the inhabitants of the palace are overwhelmed by despair. The expression is suggested by the one preceding, "the gates of the rivers are opened."

Verse 7 seems to picture a scene in the palace subsequent to the fall of the city, but certainty is impossible, since the text is in several places very obscure, as a comparison of A. V. with R. V. will readily show. R. V. reads, "And it is decreed: she is uncovered, she is carried away; and her handmaids moan as with the voice of doves, beating upon their breasts." The first difficulty is in the Hebrew *huzzabh*, which A. V. takes as a proper noun, while R. V. translates it as a verb form, "it is decreed," that is, by Jehovah. According to the Revisers, the rest of verse 7 contains the substance of the decree. "She" they seem to interpret of Nineveh (8), personified as a queen; the "handmaids" are the inhabitants mourning over the fate of their city. It is very doubtful, however, that *huzzabh* can be translated "it is decreed"; and even if it could be thus translated, the statement of the decree in the midst of the

tive, she shall be brought up, and her maids shall lead *her* as with the voice of [f]doves, tabering upon their breasts. 8 But Nineveh *is* [11]of old like a pool of water: yet they shall flee away. Stand, stand, *shall they cry;* but none shall [12]look back. 9 Take ye the spoil of silver, take the spoil of gold: [13]for *there is* none end of the store *and* glory out of

[f] Isa. 38. 14; 59. 11.— [11] Or, *from the days* that *she* hath been.

[12] Or, *cause* them *to turn.*— [13] Or, *and* their *infinite store*, etc.

description of the fall of the city sounds peculiar. The tone of the entire verse suggests that it is descriptive of the fate of the queen and of the mourning of her attendants. Therefore, from the earliest times, *huzzabh* has been interpreted as in some way denoting the queen, either as a proper name, or as an epithet descriptive of her. As a proper name it is not known otherwise; it might, perhaps, be a foreign name; as an epithet it is difficult of explanation in its present form. Ḳimchi connected it with the verb used in Psa. xlv, 9, "at thy right hand *doth stand* the queen"; hence the queen might be called "the one standing"; but, aside from the peculiarity of such expression, the form of the verb used here would remain unexplained. Hitzig changes the vowel points and reads "the lizard," and he suggests that this name is applied to the queen because she, like this "creature which takes refuge in holes," has taken refuge in out-of-the-way places in the palace. Some, following the usage of the Arabic, suggest the meaning "litter" (Isa. lxvi, 20), and then "the lady carried in the litter," that is, the queen. All these suggestions are ingenious but improbable. Others think that the noun "queen" has dropped out or that *huzzabh* is a corruption of that noun. The difficulty is still unsolved, but the probability is that the subject of the verbs in 7a is the queen. **Led away captive**—Better, R. V., "uncovered," or discovered, in the secret place where she sought to hide. **Brought up**—R. V., "carried away," into exile. A. V. is to be preferred; she is dragged up from her hiding place. **Lead her**—Better, R. V., "moan." **As with the voice of doves**—The sighs and wails of mourners are often compared to the mourning of doves (Isa. lix, 11; Ezek. vii, 16). The comparison is found also in Arabic and Assyrian; in the latter language the dove is called *summatu*, "she who mourns." **Tabering**—R. V., "beating." **Upon their breasts**—A common gesture of grief or despair among the Jews (Josephus, *Antiquities*, xvi, 7, 5; Luke xviii, 13; xxiii, 27).

Verse 8 describes the precipitate flight of the inhabitants. **Like a pool of water**—Nineveh, now named for the first time in the prophecy proper, is likened to a pool of water, because in the city were gathered multitudes of individuals, as there are multitudes of drops of water in a pool. Nowack may be right in regarding the Hebrew translated "of old," or "from of old," due to dittography. With it omitted, the first clause reads, "Nineveh, like a pool of water is she." The comparison is carried out in the rest of the verse. **They . . . flee away**—The artificial pool is surrounded by a dam; when it bursts the waters rush out; thus, with its walls battered down, the inhabitants of Nineveh scatter in every direction, and, though urged to stop, they pay no attention to the cry (Jer. xlvi, 5).

9, 10. The sack of the city. The prophet summons the victors to plunder. **Silver, . . . gold**—Immense quantities of these were carried to Nineveh by the Assyrian kings. **None end of the store**—The truth of this statement is established by the inscriptions, which enumerate again and again the enormous treasures brought to Nineveh by her victorious armies (see pp. 429f.).

Glory out of all the pleasant furniture—R. V., "the glory of all goodly furniture." An obscure phrase, whose

all the [14]pleasant furniture. **10** She is empty, and void, and waste: and the [g]heart melteth, and [h]the knees smite together, [i]and much pain *is* in all loins, and [k]the faces of them all gather blackness. **11** Where *is* the dwelling of [l]the lions, and the feedingplace of the young lions, where the lion, *even* the old lion, walked, *and* the lion's whelp, and none made *them* afraid? **12** The lion did tear in pieces enough for his whelps, and strangled for his lionesses, and filled his holes with prey, and his dens with ravin. **13** [m]Behold, I *am* against thee, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will burn her chariots in the smoke, and the sword shall devour thy young lions: and I will cut off thy prey from the earth, and the voice of [n]thy messengers shall no more be heard.

[14] Heb. *vessels of desire.*——[g] Isa. 13. 7, 8.——[h] Dan. 5. 6.——[i] Jer. 30. 6.——[k] Joel 2. 6.

[l] Job 4. 10, 11; Ezek. 19. 2–7.——[m] Ezek. 29. 3; 38. 3; 39. 1; chap. 3. 5.——[n] 2 Kings 18. 17, 19; 19. 9, 23.

grammatical connection is not quite clear; perhaps it is to be understood as in apposition to the preceding "store." If so, instead of "glory" we would better read with R. V. margin, "wealth." "Furniture" also cannot be taken in the narrow sense of that term; it must include jewels, costly vessels, rich apparel—in fact, everything that men consider precious; all these will be found in great abundance. The peculiarity of the present Hebrew text has led Marti to emend it so as to read, "Take for yourselves the abundance of all kinds of precious things." Verse 10 concludes the description. **Empty, . . . void, . . . waste**—In the original a forceful play upon words, which cannot be reproduced in English (compare Zeph. i, 15; Isa. xxiv, 1). With these three words, similar in meaning and sound, the prophet depicts the utter desolation of Nineveh. The few who have remained behind are paralyzed with terror. **Heart melteth**—Their courage gives out completely. **The knees smite together**—Their whole body trembles as a result of terror. **Much pain**—R.V., "anguish." **Is in all loins**—As in the case of a woman in childbirth (see on Mic. iv, 9; Isa. xxi, 3). **The faces of them all gather blackness**—R. V., "are waxed pale" (see on Joel ii, 6).

The Prophet's Exultation over the Fall of Nineveh, 11–13.

11. The prophet rejoices because the wicked city, the oppressor of Judah, is no more. **Where is the dwelling of the lions**—He very aptly likens Nineveh to a den of lions. The point of comparison is the cruelty and rapacity of her kings and warriors. Like lions they went about, seeking whom they might devour, and with the plunder they filled their den; "and there was none that moved the wing, or that opened the mouth, or chirped" (Isa. x, 14). The cruelty and lust of the Assyrian conquerors is further described in verse 12; but the end has come. 13. Jehovah can endure the outrages no longer. The lions, their den, and the plunder heaped up there will be destroyed. **Burn her chariots in the smoke**—Burn the chariots so that they will go up in smoke. LXX. and Peshitto have the pronoun of the second person, "thy," and this is preferable; they also read "multitude" in the place of "chariots," which involves the transposition of two consonants; but in this case the Hebrew is preferable. A slight change would give "thy den," which would be very appropriate in this connection. **Thy prey**—The magnificence, splendor, and glory made possible by the prey taken in military expeditions. **The voice of thy messengers shall no more be heard**—The power of the empire having vanished, no more messengers will be sent to the subdued nations to issue orders or demand tribute (Ezek. xix, 9). For more than two centuries had the Hebrews suffered much from the Assyrian armies. No wonder that with the doom of the world power so near the prophet breaks into a song of triumph.

CHAPTER III.

WOE to the [1] [a]bloody city! it is all full of lies *and* robbery; the prey departeth not; 2 The noise of a whip, and [b]the noise of the rattling of the wheels, and of the prancing horses, and of the jumping chariots. 3 The horseman lifteth up both [2]the bright sword and the glittering spear: and *there is* a multitude of slain, and a great number of carcasses; and *there is* none end of *their*

[1] Heb. *city of bloods*——[a] Ezek. 22. 2, 3; 24. 6, 9; Hab. 2. 12. —[b] Jer. 47. 3.

[2] Heb. *the flame of the sword, and the lightning of the spear.*

CHAPTER III.

Nineveh's Vices and Inevitable Doom, 1–19.

A woe is pronounced upon the bloody city (1). Her doom is inevitable and imminent (2, 3), but it is well deserved and no one will bemoan her (4–7). Natural strength and resources will avail no more in her case than in the case of the Egyptian No Amon (8–11). In spite of her resources she will come to a terrible end, and the whole earth will rejoice because her power is departed from her (12–19).

Verse 1 contains a woe upon the bloody city. **Bloody city**—Literally, *city of blood*, that is, of bloodshed, of violence. Nineveh represents the whole nation, which was founded and held together by the sword. King after king glories in the cruelties committed against conquered nations. The words of Ashur-nasir-pal may serve as an illustration: "With combat and slaughter I attacked the city, I captured it; three thousand of their fighting men I slew with the sword. Their spoil, their goods, their oxen, their sheep I carried away. Their numerous captives I burned with fire. I captured many of the soldiers alive with the hand; I cut off the hands and feet of some; I cut off the noses, the fingers, and ears of others; the eyes of numerous soldiers I put out. I built up a pyramid of the living and a pyramid of heads. . . Their young men and their maidens I burned." A kingdom thus founded and maintained lacks the elements of permanency and sooner or later must go to pieces. The epithet "bloody" is explained in the rest of verse 1. **Full of lies**—Since the prophet is concerned primarily with external politics, the lies and deceit condemned here are such as were practiced against other nations, though it is not improbable that they flourished also in the intercourse of Assyrians with Assyrians. **Robbery**—R. V., "rapine"; literally, *tearing in pieces.* A figure taken from the practice of the lion (ii, 11, 12), that tears to pieces whatever falls into his power (Psa. vii, 2). **The prey departeth not**—Not the prey *taken*, in the sense that it is always plentiful, but the prey-*taking*, that is, robbery and oppression, never ceases. It is the one policy Assyria carried out consistently from beginning to end.

Verses 2, 3 picture the fulfillment of the woe. The hostile army attacks and takes Nineveh, a great slaughter ensues, and the city is filled with corpses. Verse 2 describes the noise of the onslaught: the cracking of the whips as the charioteers urge on the horses, the rattling of the wheels as they speed along, the prancing of the horses as they rage to and fro, and the bumping of the chariots as they rush wildly over the rugged roads, made less passable through obstacles placed in the way by the defenders. Instead of "the noise of a whip, and the noise of the rattling of the wheels," we might translate, "Hark! the whip! and hark! the rattling of wheels!" (G.-K., 146b.) Verse 3 depicts the sights that meet the eye. The charge is progressing; nearer and nearer the enemy approaches; one can see distinctly his various movements. In 3a R. V. is to be preferred; and the whole description becomes more vivid if "there is" is omitted whenever, as indicated by the italics, it is not in the original. **Mounting**—Better, with R. V. margin, "charging"; literally,

corpses; they stumble upon their corpses: 4 Because of the multitude of the whoredoms of the well-favored harlot, [c]the mistress of witchcrafts, that selleth nations through her whoredoms, and families through her witchcrafts. 5 [d]Behold, I *am* against thee, saith the LORD of hosts; and [e]I will discover thy skirts upon thy face, [f]and I will show the nations thy nakedness, and the kingdoms thy shame. 6 And I will cast abominable filth upon thee, and [g]make thee vile, and

[c] Isa. 47. 9, 12; Rev. 18. 2, 3.—[d] Chap. 2. 13.

[e] Isa. 47. 2, 3; Jer. 13. 22, 26; Ezek. 16. 37; Mic. 1. 11.—[f] Hab. 2. 16.—[g] Mal. 2. 9.

causing to ascend, that is, the horse; to urge it to greater speed. Seen are also the flashing swords and the glittering spears. Scenes representing charges of this sort are depicted on numerous reliefs in the palaces of Nineveh. The prophet describes the sequel with equal vividness. The defenders are slain; corpses are piled up in heaps; the victorious assailants stumble over them as they rush into the city.

The retribution is just; no one pities her, 4–7.

Verse 4 contains a new denunciation, justifying the judgment announced in verses 5–7. Nineveh is personified as a harlot. **Multitude of the whoredoms**—The figure of faithlessness to the marriage relation, when applied to Israel, is used (1) of idolatry, (2) of alliances with other nations, both being evidences of faithlessness to and lack of confidence in Jehovah. Applied to other nations it denotes improper political or commercial intercourse (Isa. xxiii, 17). Nahum, in this passage, refers not to idolatry or falling away from the true God, nor to protective alliances or commercial intercourse, but, as Hitzig has so well said, to "the treacherous friendship and statecraft with which the coquette in her search for conquests ensnared the smaller states." **The well-favored harlot**—Not, the one receiving special favors, but "beautiful," "good-looking." "Beauty and charm is a point in the harlot." With her splendor and brilliancy Nineveh dazzled and ensnared the nations. **Mistress of witchcrafts**—In this connection the expression does not denote black arts, but "the secret wiles which, like magical arts, do not come to the light in themselves, but only in their effects" (compare 2 Kings ix, 22). By means of these crafty and treacherous dealings Assyria made easy victims of the other nations. **Nations . . . families**—Synonymous expressions denoting the nations conquered by Assyria (Amos iii, 1). **Selleth**—Is used here not of selling into bondage or slavery to other nations, but in the general sense of robbing of liberty, making tributary, or in the sense of consigning to ruin (Deut. xxxii, 30; Esth. vii, 4). A similar verb in Arabic means "ensnare," "beguile," and this meaning is given by several commentators to the verb in this passage.

5–7. Jehovah cannot overlook this treacherous conduct. **I am against thee**—See ii, 13. The punishment will be according to the *lex talionis.* The part of a harlot she has acted, the fate of a harlot she must endure. **Discover**—R. V., "uncover." **Thy skirts**—I will remove the skirts which form the covering of the body, and which by their gaudiness have added much to her attractiveness. **Upon thy face**—Or, *over;* so that the skirts are drawn over the face. Margin renders, *"before* thy face." She must look on as she is exposed naked to the curious gaze of the bystanders. The same picture is found several times in the Old Testament (Jer. xiii, 26; Isa. xlvii, 3; Hos. ii, 10); it may be borrowed from an ancient custom of exposing a harlot or adulteress in public (Ezek. xvi, 37–40).

As she stands exposed she will be subjected to indignities of every sort. **Abominable filth**—Literally, *abhorrence,* or *objects of abhorrence,* applied

will set thee as [h]a gazingstock. 7 And it shall come to pass, *that* all they that look upon thee [i]shall flee from thee, and say, Nineveh is laid waste: [k]who will bemoan her? whence shall I seek comforters for thee? 8 Art thou better than [3] [4]populous [m]No, that was situate among the rivers, *that had* the waters round about it, whose rampart *was* the sea, *and* her wall *was* from the sea? 9 Ethiopia and Egypt *were* her

[h] Heb. 10. 33.——[i] Rev. 18. 10.——[k] Jer. 15. 5.——[l] Amos 6. 2.——[3] Or, *nourishing*.

[4] Heb. *No Amon*.——[m] Jer. 46. 25, 26; Ezek. 30. 14–16.

quite frequently to idols; hence Kleinert interprets the threat as equivalent to "I will bury thee underneath thy idols" (compare i, 14); but it should be understood here in a more general sense of things that one views with abhorrence and disgust, dirt and filth. To throw these upon a person is a sign of greatest contempt. **Make thee vile**—The same verb is translated in Mic. vii, 6, "dishonor"; it means to accord contemptuous treatment, to insult (Jer. xiv, 21). Hitzig, deriving it from a different root, translates "cast carcass upon." **Set thee as a gazingstock**—Literally, *a sight*. The treatment accorded by Jehovah will be so startling that the eyes of all who see it will be fixed upon her in malicious joy (Ezek. xxviii, 17, 18; compare Matt. i, 19; 1 Cor. iv, 9). The picture will be so awful that the on-lookers will be horror-struck and flee in terror. In 7b the figure of the harlot is interpreted as applying to Nineveh. Without pity and sympathy she must go to her ruin.

The fate of No Amon is to be the fate of Nineveh, 8–11.

Nineveh may boast in her strong defenses, but they will not save her. No Amon in Egypt was the equal of Nineveh in this respect, yet she suffered inglorious defeat. Nineveh can expect no better fate.

Art thou better—Better protected or fortified; or, "shalt thou be better?" that is, shalt thou have a better fate? **Populous No**—Better, R. V., "No-amon," that is, *No* of the god *Amon*. No is the Old Testament name of Thebes, the capital of Upper Egypt (Jer. xlvi, 25; Ezek. xxx, 14), whose chief deity was Amon. It was a prominent city from very early times, and for many centuries it was the center of Egyptian civilization and power, until, in the seventh century, it fell before the Assyrian invaders. Its final capture by Ashurbanapal is in the mind of the prophet (see p. 429). The rest of verse 8 describes the location of the city. **Among the rivers**—The city proper lay on the eastern banks of the Nile, here about fifteen hundred feet wide. The noun is used ordinarily of the Nile; the plural might be explained as a plural of majesty, "the great river"; but it seems better to take it as including the canals receiving the water from the Nile (Exod. vii, 19). **Waters round about**—The Nile and the canals surrounded the city, thus forming a natural defense. Perhaps moats formed a part of the fortifications, as in the case of Nineveh. **Whose rampart was the sea**—This translation presupposes a slight change in the original. The "sea" is the Nile which, during its overflow, resembles a sea (compare Isa. xviii, 2; xix, 5; Jer. li, 36). **Her wall was from the sea**—R. V., "of the sea," that is, consisted of the sea, which would have to be understood again of the Nile but the construction is peculiar. LXX., with a very slight change, reads, "and waters were her wall," which is to be preferred. Some consider, though on insufficient ground, the description unsuitable for Thebes; hence No Amon has been identified with Memphis and several cities in the Delta.

Verse 8 describes the natural strength of the city; verse 9 points to her military resources. **Ethiopia**—See on Zeph. ii, 12. **Egypt**—At the time No Amon was threatened

strength, and *it was* infinite; Put and Lubim were [5]thy helpers. **10** Yet *was* she carried away, she went into captivity: [n]her young children also were dashed in pieces [o]at the top of all the streets: and they [p]cast lots for her honorable men, and all her great men were bound in chains. **11** Thou also shalt be [q]drunken: thou shalt be hid, thou also shalt

[5] Heb. *in thy help.*——[n] Psa. 137. 9; Isa. 13. 16; Hos. 13. 16.——[o] Lam. 2. 19.

[p] Joel 3. 3; Obad. 11.——[q] Jer. 25. 17, 27; chap. 1. 10.

Ethiopia and Egypt were one under an Ethiopian dynasty, so that the military strength of both might be summoned to the defense of Egypt. **Infinite**—Literally, *without end* (ii, 9; iii, 3; Isa. ii, 7). **Put and Lubim**—The latter are the Libyans, the people settled west of Lower Egypt, who had succeeded in securing a strong foothold in the Delta itself. Put is mentioned several times in the Old Testament (Gen. x, 6; Ezek. xxvii, 10; xxxviii, 5), but opinions differ as to its location. It has been identified with the Egyptian *Punt*, corresponding to the modern Abyssinian and Somali coast in Eastern Africa, a country to which Egyptian kings undertook expeditions (see on Zeph. iii, 10). Against this identification it has been urged that this district never supplied Egypt with soldiers, which assertion can neither be proved nor disproved. LXX. sometimes translates "Libyans"; for this reason, and because sometimes the two are named together, some hold that they are closely connected. Put has been thought to denote all the peoples west of Lower Egypt, while the Libyans, in the narrower sense, were the tribes immediately west of the Delta; others make Put a distinct tribe west of Libya. Other identifications, which have found some support in an inscription of Nebuchadnezzar, make Put an island of the Mediterranean or the coast of Asia Minor, whence later Egyptian kings secured mercenaries. **Thy helpers**—Whatever the exact location of Put, it, with Libya, furnished soldiers for the defense of Thebes. LXX. and other ancient versions read "her helpers," which, in parallelism with "her strength," is preferable.

10. In spite of her natural strength and her limitless resources No Amon fell (p. 429), and her treasures were carried to Assyria. **Her young children also were dashed in pieces**—A barbarous custom, not uncommon in ancient warfare (Hos. xiii, 16; Isa. xiii, 16); another cruel practice was to rip up pregnant women (Amos i, 13; Hos. xiii, 16), in order to exterminate all male children, and thus prevent future revolts. The "top" or "head" of the streets (Isa. li, 20) is probably the place where several streets meet, the public square, where many might see the execution. **Cast lots for her honorable men**—The captured nobles were distributed as slaves (see on Joel iii, 3; Obad. 11). **Her great men were bound in chains**—The inscription of Ashurbanapal states that his commanders in Egypt "captured the rebellious kings and laid their hands and feet in iron chains and iron bonds."

11. As Thebes with all her magnificence and splendor became a heap of ruin, so Nineveh must fall under the angry blows of Jehovah. **Be drunken**—From the deep draught she must take from the cup of Jehovah's wrath (Hab. ii, 16; Obad. 16). A figure of stupefaction caused by calamity (Isa. li, 17ff.). **Shalt be hid**—So that no one can see a trace of her. Nineveh will be reduced to nothing, will vanish completely (i, 8; ii, 11; Obad. 16). Some render, "thou shalt be shrouded in darkness," that is, shalt swoon or faint, as a result of the powerful draught (Isa. li, 20). Either interpretation gives acceptable sense. **Shalt seek strength**—R. V., "a stronghold." As the enemy presses nearer she will seek protection and shelter, but in vain; she, like No Amon, will be utterly ruined.

seek strength because of the enemy. 12 All thy strong holds *shall be like* [r]fig trees with the firstripe figs: if they be shaken, they shall even fall into the mouth of the eater. 13 Behold, [s]thy people in the midst of thee *are* women: the gates of thy land shall be set wide open unto thine enemies: the fire shall devour thy [t]bars. 14 Draw thee waters for the siege, [u]fortify thy strong holds: go into clay, and tread the mortar,

[r] Rev. 6. 13.—[s] Jer. 50. 37; 51. 30.

[t] Psa. 147. 13; Jer. 51. 30.—[u] Chap. 2. 1.

Vain struggles of Nineveh, 12–19.

The description of the hopeless struggle begins with verse 11; but it seems better to regard that verse as the concluding portion of the preceding section, threatening Nineveh with a fate similar to that of No Amon. Desperate efforts are made to save the city, but all in vain. Rapidly the enemy advances, and the city goes down before him; all the earth rejoices over her downfall. 12. The fortresses throughout the land fall almost without a blow. **Strongholds** ["fortresses"]—Not the fortifications of Nineveh, but the strongholds scattered throughout the land to protect the capital. **Like fig trees**—The *tertium comparationis* is the ease with which they are taken. It requires only a feeble shaking, and down come the figs (Isa. xxviii, 4); so it requires only a feeble assault and the fortresses capitulate, and the cowardly defenders become an easy prey. **Firstripe figs**—See on Hos. ix, 10. 13. The news of the resistless advance of the invader causes consternation everywhere, even in the capital. **In the midst of thee**—In Nineveh. **Thy people . . . are women**—The people, including the soldiers, are so terrified by the approach of the enemy that strength and courage fail them; they become feeble like women. The Assyrians were considered the most warlike nation of the time; the transformation is therefore the more startling. The figure is not uncommon in the Old Testament (compare Isa. xix, 16; Jer. l, 37; li, 30), and it is found also in the inscriptions. In 13b the prophet reiterates the cause of the terror. The tenses of R. V. are to be preferred. **The gates of thy land shall be set** ["are"] **wide open**—The entrance into the land and the roads to the capital. These were barred by strongholds and fortresses (12), but since the latter have fallen the gates are wide open and the enemy can advance unhindered. **Fire shall devour** ["hath devoured"] **thy bars**—Bars prevent the entrance into fortified towns (see on Amos i, 5); here the term seems to be used metaphorically of the fortresses themselves (Jer. li, 30), which are intended to bar the way to the capital.

With these burned, so that the enemy can advance unhindered, a siege is inevitable; the prophet urges the people in verse 14 to make preparations for it. One cannot fail to see the irony of the appeal, for the prophet immediately proceeds to make plain that all efforts will be futile. **Draw thee waters for the siege**—In a prolonged siege the ordinary water supply may prove insufficient; for this emergency they are to prepare themselves by storing up water. Billerbeck, on the basis of Assyrian representations (compare, for example, Layard, *Nineveh and Its Remains*, ii, 32), thinks that the water was to be used in the defense, to be poured, perhaps boiling, upon the heads of the assaulters. That this was one means of defense is quite probable; that the illustration in Layard or the expression in Nahum refers to it is more than doubtful. **Fortify thy strongholds**—R. V., "strengthen thy fortresses." Improve the fortifications, the towers, walls, etc. How this is to be done is stated in the rest of the verse. **Clay, . . . mortar**—Since it was exceedingly difficult to secure stone for building purposes, brick, sometimes burned, more often only sun-dried, was used as a common

make strong the brickkiln. 15 There shall the fire devour thee; the sword shall cut thee off, it shall eat thee up like [x]the cankerworm: make thyself many as the cankerworm, make thyself many as the locusts. 16 Thou hast multiplied thy merchants above the stars of

[x] Joel 1. 4.

building material in Assyria, even in the construction of fortifications; and the excavations have shown that brick was used very extensively in the fortifications of Nineveh. The people are urged to make bricks, for the strengthening of the defenses already existing, for the erection of new ones, and for the repairing of possible breaches. The two exhortations are practically identical in meaning (Isa. xli, 25); they are to tread the clay of which the bricks are to be made, so as to prepare it for the brickmaker. **Make strong the brickkiln**—Should be translated with margin R. V., "lay hold of the brick mold" (2 Sam. xii, 31); having prepared the clay, they are to make the bricks.

15. Nothing can save the city **There**—Is understood best, as commonly, in a local sense; in that very place, fortified with extraordinary care, and even while attempting to add to its strength destruction will come. Fire shall devour the city (compare Rogers, *History of Babylonia and Assyria*, ii, 292), while the inhabitants are cut down in a terrible slaughter. **Like the cankerworm**—Utterly and completely (see on Joel i, 4, 7, 11).

With 15b begins a new thought, continued in verse 16; but down to the end of verse 17 the details of interpretation are more or less uncertain. LXX. omits one of the imperative clauses in 15b; if both are retained the second must be considered a repetition for the sake of emphasis. Since both exhortations are addressed to Nineveh, both imperatives should be read as feminines, though in the present text one is masculine. The exact force of the verses and the exact relation of the separate clauses to one another are uncertain, but it seems best, on the assumption that the present Hebrew text is substantially correct, to understand 15b as a new ironical exhortation to strengthen the defenses, by summoning a greater number of defenders. **Make thyself many as the cankerworm, . . . locusts**—For the names see on Joel i, 4. The soldiers are to be increased in number until they resemble a swarm of locusts. According to the present Hebrew text the prophet continues in verse 16, again in a spirit of sarcasm: There is no need for advice; thou hast already multiplied thy numbers until they are more than the stars of heaven, but—the multitudes are not soldiers prepared to fight and to beat back the attack. **Merchants**—The very location of Nineveh made her a prominent commercial center from a very early period; this helped to increase her wealth and splendor, but merchants, unaccustomed to hardships and often reared in luxury, do not make the best soldiers.

A more satisfactory sense would be had if the *perfect* of 16a were changed into an *imperative*, and if the three imperatives, "make thyself many . . . , make thyself many . . . , (15b) multiply" (16a), were taken in a concessive sense, "though thou shouldst make thyself many . . . , though thou shouldst make thyself many . . . , though thou shouldst multiply" (G.-K., 110a). To these clauses, forming the protasis, 16b, 17 would be the apodosis; even the great numbers shall vanish away.

Verses 16b, 17, which belong closely together, picture the sudden disappearance of the defenders of Nineveh; they point, therefore, to the sequel of the siege—the time when the enemy has entered the city. Again the prophet employs the figure of the swiftly moving swarms of locusts.

heaven: the cankerworm [e]spoileth, and fleeth away. **17** [y]Thy crowned *are* as the locusts, and thy captains as the great grasshoppers, which camp in the hedges in the cold day, *but* when the sun ariseth they flee away, and their place is not known where they *are*. **18** [z]Thy shepherds

[e] Or, *spreadeth himself.*—[y] Rev. 9. 7.

[z] Exod. 15. 16; Psa. 76. 6.

16b is the introduction to verse 17, calling attention to the point which the speaker desires to emphasize, the rapidity with which the locusts move; in verse 17 the application is made. **The cankerworm spoileth, and fleeth away**—If this is the right translation the cankerworm represents the enemy who plunders the city and then withdraws quickly. In the sense of *spoiling* the verb is not uncommon; but since in verses 15 and 17 the Ninevites are likened to locusts, it seems better to understand here also the cankerworms as representing the Ninevites. If so, another meaning of the verb must be sought. It is used quite frequently in the sense of *stripping off a garment;* applied to the locusts it may refer to the stripping off of the skin that confines the wings, which enable them to fly. Margin R. V., "spreadeth himself." The transformation progresses very rapidly; hardly has the locust freed his wings when away he flies. In this connection A. B. Davidson calls attention to Tennyson's lines:

To-day I saw the dragon-fly
Come from the wells where he did lie;
An inner impulse rent the veil
Of his old husk; from head to tail
Come out clear plates of sapphire mail.
He dried his wings; like gauze they grew;
Through crofts and pastures wet with dew,
A living flash of light he flew.

17. With the same swiftness the Ninevites will disappear. This interpretation of verse 17 is preferable to that which, omitting 16b entirely, coördinates 17 with the concessive clauses of 15b and 16a, and sees the apodosis in verse 18. **Crowned** ["princes"]—A word of uncertain meaning, which occurs only here in the Old Testament; it is thought to be an Assyrian loan word denoting some prominent official. Wellhausen compares it with one found in Zech. ix, 6, and Deut. xxiii, 2, "bastard" or "bastard race," that is, a man of uncertain, impure origin; but this sense is not suitable here. **Captains** ["marshals"]—Heb. *tiphsār,* found again in Jer. li, 27, where it denotes a high official. It also is probably an Assyrian loan word; it resembles the Assyrian *dupsharru,* "the tablet writer," who occupied a prominent place during the reign of the literary Ashurbanapal. Here it cannot be used in this narrow sense, but in the more general sense of high official (compare Judg. v, 14). **Locusts**—See on Joel i, 4. **Great grasshoppers**—R. V., "swarms of grasshoppers"; literally, *grasshopper of grasshopper.* A peculiar construction which may be due to the accidental repetition of the one word "grasshopper" or "swarm of grasshoppers" (compare Amos vii, 1); the sense is "like grasshoppers." The point of comparison is the suddenness with which they disappear. **In the cold day**—The cold stiffens the wings of the locusts, therefore on a cold day they settle down in a sheltered spot. **When the sun ariseth they flee away**—Under the warm rays of the sun they revive, and immediately they disappear, without leaving a trace behind. So the inhabitants of Nineveh will vanish without leaving behind them a trace.

18. Whither they will go is here stated. **King of Assyria**—Since the city is thought of as destroyed she can no longer be addressed; therefore the prophet turns to the king either as an individual or as a personification of the remnant of the Assyrian power. In view of the fact that throughout the rest of the chapter Nineveh is addressed, some consider the transition to the king strange, and they con-

slumber, O [a]king of Assyria: thy [7]nobles shall dwell *in the dust*: thy people is [b]scattered upon the mountains, and no man gathereth *them*.
19 *There is* no [8]healing of thy bruise; [c]thy wound is grievous: [d]all that hear the bruit of thee shall clap the hands over[e] thee: for upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed continually?

[a] Jer. 50. 18; Ezek. 31. 3, etc.—[7] Or, *valiant ones*.—[b] 1 Kings 22. 17.

[8] Heb. *wrinkling*.—[c] Mic. 1. 9.—[d] Lam. 2. 15; Zeph. 2. 15; see Isa. 14. 8, etc.

sider the words a later insertion, but for the reason just stated it seems quite natural that the king should be addressed. Marti thinks that the words are a corruption from the original "woe unto thee." **Shepherds . . . nobles**—The rulers and heads of the people. **Slumber . . . shall dwell in the dust** ["are at rest"]—A euphemistic description of the slumber and sleep of death. For the use of the first verb in this sense compare Jer. li, 57; Psa. lxxvi, 5, etc. The second verb means literally *to dwell;* a slight change, favored by LXX., would give "lie down," that is, in rest or sleep. With the leaders dead, the people scatter like a flock of sheep without a shepherd (Zech. xiii, 7; 1 Kings xxii, 17), and there is no one to gather them. As a matter of fact, the destruction of Nineveh in 607–606 marked the dissolution of Assyria; the Scythians and Chaldeans divided the empire between them.

In 19a the prophet repeats that the condition is hopeless; the hurt (Lam. ii, 11; Psa. lx, 2) is incurable; they cannot recover from the blow by their own efforts (Jer. xiv, 17; xxx, 12), and no one is anxious to become their physician; on the contrary, all rejoice and glory in the misfortune that has befallen them. **Clap the hands**—An expression of joy (Isa. lv, 12), here of malicious joy. The rejoicing is universal, because all have suffered from the oppression and violence of Assyria. With the threats of Nahum compare Zeph. ii, 13–15.

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF HABAKKUK.

The Prophet.

HABAKKUK is the eighth of the Minor Prophets. The name means *embrace* or *ardent embrace*. Some of the ancient rabbis, connecting the name with 2 Kings iv, 16, "thou shalt embrace a son," imagined that the prophet was the son of the Shunammite woman. The LXX. form of the name *Hambakoum*, Theod. *Hambakouk*, presupposes the Hebrew Habbakuk. A similar word occurs in Assyrian as the name of a garden plant.

While the book itself throws little light on the person of the prophet, and the rest of the Old Testament is silent concerning him, numerous legends have grown up around his name. The identification of the prophet with the son of the Shunammite woman is one. Another, connecting Isa. xxi, 6, with Hab. ii, 1, makes Habakkuk the watchman set by Isaiah to watch for the fall of Babylon. One of the recensions of the LXX. text of *Bel and the Dragon* declares that the story was taken "from the prophecy of Habakkuk, the son of Jesus, of the tribe of Levi." This must refer to an unknown apocryphal book ascribed to our prophet. What authority there may be for calling his father Jesus we do not know; the claim that he was of the tribe of Levi may be based upon the presence of the musical note at the end of the third chapter. According to the *Lives of the Prophets* (see Nahum, p. 429), he belonged to *Beth-zoḥer*, or *Beth-zaḥer*, of the tribe of Simeon. A very interesting story is found in *Bel and the Dragon* (33-39): "Now there was in Jewry the prophet Hambakoum (= Habakkuk), who had made pottage, and had broken bread into a bowl, and was going into the field, for to bring it to the reapers. But the angel of the Lord said unto Habakkuk, Go,

carry the dinner that thou hast into Babylon unto Daniel, who is in the lions' den. And Habakkuk said, Lord, I never saw Babylon; neither do I know where the den is. Then the angel of the Lord took him by the crown, and lifted him up by the hair of his head, and with the blast of his breath set him in Babylon over the den. And Habakkuk cried, saying, O Daniel, Daniel, take the dinner which God hath sent thee. And Daniel said, Thou hast remembered me, O God: neither hast thou forsaken them that love thee. So Daniel arose, and did eat: and the angel of God set Habakkuk in his own place immediately." According to the *Lives,* Habakkuk died two years before the return of the exiles from Babylon. All these legends have little or no historical value.

The Interpretation of Chapters I, II.

Since the date to which chapters i, ii are assigned depends very largely upon their interpretation, the latter may be considered first. The different interpretations advocated may be grouped under three heads: 1. The prophet teaches that the sin of Judah is to be punished by the Chaldeans, who in turn will suffer severe punishment. 2. Nothing is said of the sin of Judah; the prophet dwells upon the wrongs done to Judah and other nations by the Chaldeans, and announces the impending doom of the oppressor. 3. Nothing is said of the sin of Judah; the present oppressors are not the Chaldeans, but the Assyrians (Budde, Betteridge) or the Egyptians (G. A. Smith), whose overthrow is to be accomplished by the Chaldeans.

These views will become clearer if a brief outline of the two chapters according to each view is given:

I. According to the first view:

Chapter i, 2-4. The corruption of Judah; the oppression of the righteous Jews by the wicked Jews, which calls for the divine manifestation in judgment against the oppressors.

Chapter i, 5-11. Jehovah announces that he is about to send the Chaldeans to execute judgment.

Chapter i, 12-17. The prophet is perplexed. He cannot understand how a righteous God can use these barbarians to execute judgment upon a people more righteous than they. He considers even the wicked among the Jews better than the Chaldeans.

Chapter ii, 1-4. Jehovah solves the perplexing problem by announcing that the exaltation of the Chaldeans will be but temporary; in the end they will meet their doom, while the righteous will live.

Chapter ii, 5-20. Woes against the Chaldeans.

II. The second view finds it necessary to change the present arrangement of the verses. Chapter i, 5-11, in the present position, will not fit into the interpretation. For this reason Wellhausen and others omit these verses as a later addition; on the other hand, Giesebrecht would place them before i, 2, as the opening verses of the prophecy. The transposition would require a few other minor changes, so as to make the verses a suitable beginning and establish a smooth transition from verse 11 to verse 2. Omitting the troublesome verses, the following outline of the two chapters may be given:

Chapter i, 2-4. The oppression of the righteous Jews by the wicked Chaldeans.

Chapter i, 12-17. Appeal to Jehovah on behalf of the Jews against their oppressors.

Chapter ii, 1-4. Jehovah promises deliverance (see above).

Chapter ii, 5-20. Woes against the Chaldeans.

III. The third view also finds it necessary to alter the present order of verses. Again i, 5-11, in the present position, interferes with the theory; therefore these verses are given a more suitable place after ii, 4. According to this interpretation the outline is as follows:

Chapter i, 2-4. Oppression of the righteous Jews by the wicked Assyrians (Budde) or Egyptians (G. A. Smith).

Chapter i, 12-17. Appeal to Jehovah on behalf of the oppressed against the oppressor.

Chapter ii, 1-4. Jehovah promises deliverance (see above).

Chapter i, 5-11. The Chaldeans will be the instruments to execute judgment upon the oppressors and to bring deliverance to the Jews.

Chapter ii, 5-20. Woes against the Assyrians or Egyptians.

Each of these views has its defenders among scholars. A full discussion is not possible in a book of this character, and all that we may do here is to set the facts in a clear light and indicate which of the three views offers the most probable interpretation.

III. Against the third view several objections have been urged: 1. It would be exceedingly difficult to account for the transposition of i, 5-11, from their original position after ii, 4, to their present place. The explanation offered by Budde is ingenious but not convincing. A. B. Davidson says of it, "If it is true, criticism is not without its romance." 2. The absence of all mention of the Assyrians or Egyptians is peculiar. There may have been "no need of naming" them (Betteridge), but when other considerations make it doubtful that these nations are meant the silence cannot be overlooked. 3. From i, 5-11, no matter where these verses are placed, it would seem that the Chaldeans and their methods of warfare were well known to the prophet; but on this view the Chaldeans were just appearing upon the scene when the prophecy was uttered. The powers of the Chaldeans were first shown in the overthrow of the Assyrians and the Egyptians. 4. According to this theory i, 5-11, refers to the Chaldeans, i, 12-17, to the Assyrians or Egyptians; but a comparison of i, 11, "whose might is his god," with i, 16, "he sacrificeth unto his net, and burneth incense unto his drag," results in the impression that both passages refer to one and the same nation.

II. The same objections cannot be urged against the second view. The arbitrary treatment of i, 5-11, constitutes the only serious objection. It is very easy to throw out verses, but few are ready to consider the fact that a certain passage runs counter to an otherwise doubtful theory as sufficient reason for omitting it. If it is regarded an earlier independent prophecy

its present position must still be accounted for. To transpose the verses to the beginning of the chapter does not remove the difficulty, for they are less suitable there than verses 2-4, which permit a natural and consistent development of thought.

I. Objections have been raised also against the first view: 1. It makes the "wicked" in one place a portion of the Jews (i, 4); in another (i, 13), the Chaldeans. 2. It is said that in i, 5, 6, the "raising up" of the Chaldeans is still in the future, while i, 13-16; ii, 5-20, describe their treatment of the conquered nations in a manner which seems to indicate that the Chaldeans and their manner of warfare were well known. 3. It seems unnatural that "in a prophecy the main theme of which is to set forth the injustice which Israel suffers, and to announce judgment upon its authors," injustice prevalent in Israel should receive the emphasis given to it by the prophet in i, 2-4.

One can readily see, however, that these objections have less foundation than those urged against the other interpretations. Taking them in the order stated, the following may be said in reply: 1. There is no plausible reason why a general term like "righteous" or "wicked" may not refer, in one and the same discourse, to more than one person. Why may not one discourse deal with two classes of persons, both of which deserve to be called "wicked"? 2. The second objection rests upon a misapprehension. The reference in i, 6, is not to the first appearance of the Chaldeans *in history,* but to their first and imminent advance *against Judah.* When they undertook the first expedition against Judah, several important conquests had been achieved by them, and there had been ample opportunity to become acquainted with them and the manner of their warfare. 3. It may be questioned whether the objector has defined properly the "main theme" of the two chapters. The text, as it now stands, permits a perfectly natural development of the prophet's thought; in reality, the development becomes more vivid, for instead of one problem that perplexes the prophet we have two, and instead of one divine reply we

have two. Surely there is nothing impossible or improbable in this (see further on *Contents*).

On the whole, the first interpretation, which requires no omissions or transpositions, seems to satisfy most completely the facts in the case, and it is along this line that the prophecy of Habakkuk is interpreted in the subsequent pages.

The Date of the Prophecy.

Here we are concerned primarily with the date of the prophetic activity of Habakkuk. Whether or not all the utterances in the book are rightly ascribed to him will be considered in a subsequent section.

The question of date is closely bound up with that of interpretation. Budde, on the theory that the oppressors threatened with destruction are the Assyrians (above, III), dates the prophecy 621-615 B. C. Granting that the Assyrians are in the mind of the prophet, which has been shown to be improbable, this date is open to serious objections. Betteridge, who agrees with Budde in regarding the Assyrians as the oppressors, says with much justice (*American Journal of Theology,* 1903, pp. 674ff.): "On our view of the direction of the prophecy against the Assyrians and of its attitude toward the Chaldeans, *it is impossible to suppose that it could have originated at any time within the last quarter of the seventh century B. C.* This is the weak point in Budde's theory. While giving him all honor for his brilliant discovery that the prophecy is directed against the Assyrians, yet we feel that he was too much influenced by the traditional placing of the book at the close of the seventh century to draw the necessary inference from his theory and seek a satisfactory occasion for the prophecy."

After 626 B. C. the hold of Assyria on the Palestinian states relaxed; and the description of i, 2-4, if it applies to the Assyrians, becomes unsuitable after that date. On the other hand, so far as we know, the Chaldeans had not become sufficiently prominent in 621-615 to enable the prophet and his

contemporaries to learn of their cruelties and of their manner of treating conquered nations. But such knowledge is presupposed in i, 5ff., for the rejection of which verses there is insufficient reason, and which are retained by Budde and placed after ii, 4. If the Assyrians are alluded to, a much more satisfactory date is that suggested by Betteridge, namely, about 701 B. C., in connection with the siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib (2 Kings xviii, xix). "As we interpret the prophecy and understand the history, Habakkuk was an associate of Isaiah in this great crisis of Jewish history, and just at the time when Isaiah was so vigorously asserting that Jerusalem should not fall into the hands of the Assyrians, Habakkuk comes forward with a similar assurance. . . . Our view that Habakkuk is a pupil and associate of Isaiah furnishes the most satisfactory explanation of the remarkable similarity in thought and diction between his prophecy and many of the utterances of Isaiah." The threat that the Chaldeans will execute judgment he connects with Chaldean uprisings, rumors of which he thinks caused Sennacherib to raise the siege of Jerusalem (2 Kings xix, 6, 7; Isa. xxxvii, 6, 7); earlier uprisings under Merodach-baladan would have enabled the prophet to learn something of the character of the Chaldeans.

If Habakkuk prophesied against the Assyrians, this is the most suitable date for the prophecy; if they are not the oppressors (see above, pp. 464ff.), then with the Assyrians fall the dates proposed by Budde and by Betteridge.

If the prophecy is directed against Egypt, we are shut up to a very definite period, between 608 and 604 B. C. In the former year Necho, Pharaoh of Egypt, conquered and slew Josiah of Judah near Megiddo, and asserted his sovereignty by deposing the successor of Josiah, Jehoahaz, whom the people had chosen, and placing on the throne Jehoiakim. But the rule of Egypt was short-lived. In 605 or 604 Nebuchadnezzar met Necho in battle near the Hittite capital, Carchemish, on the Euphrates. The Egyptians suffered a decisive defeat, and their rule in Judah came to an end. Only during

the period between these two events had Egypt the opportunity to oppress Judah as described in i, 2-4; hence between the two dates the prophecy of Habakkuk must have been uttered. But are the Egyptians the oppressors? The reasons advanced against identifying the oppressor with the Assyrians are equally applicable here. If so, the prophecy may have to be assigned to a different date.

A different date is suggested by those who think that the wrongdoing condemned in i, 2-4, is the oppression of Judah by the Chaldeans, and that the entire prophecy (omitting i, 5-11) is directed against the latter. If the Chaldeans are the oppressors of Judah the prophecy must be assigned to a date subsequent to the battle of Carchemish in 605-604, for only after the defeat of the Egyptians could the Chaldeans carry out a policy of world conquest; and it was some years after that event that the Chaldeans first came into direct contact with Judah. But on this theory i, 2-4, 12ff.; ii, 8ff., presuppose the lapse of a considerable period of conquest, the subduing of many nations, the cruel oppression of Judah for some length of time; therefore, Nowack is undoubtedly correct, on this theory, in bringing the prophecy down to a period subsequent to the first exile in 597, or, as he says, "in round numbers about 590 B. C." But does i, 2-4, refer to oppression by the Chaldeans? (See above, pp. 464ff.)

A different date must be sought if i, 2-4, is interpreted as referring to the oppression of Jews by Jews, and i, 5ff., as a threat that Jehovah will raise up the Chaldeans, already known as a nation thirsting for blood, to punish the wickedness of Judah. These verses would seem to indicate (1) that the Chaldeans had not yet come into direct contact with Judah, and (2) that they had already given exhibitions of the cruel character of their warfare. Nebuchadnezzar advanced against Judah about 600 B. C.; but the years since the fall of Nineveh, in 607-606, and the battle of Carchemish, in 605-604, had given abundant opportunity to the Chaldeans to reveal their true character, and to the prophet and his contemporaries to

become acquainted with this cruel successor of Nineveh. On this theory, therefore, the prophetic activity of Habakkuk must be assigned to a date shortly before 600 B. C.

That the description in i, 2-4, fits this date, a comparison of these verses with the prophecies of Jeremiah delivered at approximately the same time will readily show; compare, for example, chapters xxv, xxvii, xxxv. "From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, even unto this day, these three and twenty years, the word of Jehovah hath come unto me, and I have spoken unto you, rising up early and speaking; but ye have not hearkened. And Jehovah hath sent unto you all his servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them (but ye have not hearkened, nor inclined your ear to hear), saying, Return ye now every one from his evil way, and from the evil of your doings, and dwell in the land that Jehovah hath given unto you and to your fathers, from of old and even for evermore; and go not after other gods to serve them, and to worship them, and provoke me not to anger with the work of your hands; and I will do you no hurt. Yet ye have not hearkened unto me, saith Jehovah; that ye may provoke me to anger with the work of your hands to your own hurt. Therefore thus saith Jehovah of hosts: Because ye have not heard my words, behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith Jehovah, and I will send unto Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about; and I will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and a hissing, and perpetual desolations" (xxv, 3-9; compare Zephaniah, pp. 510ff).

Integrity of the Book.

More than one half of the book, including i, 5-11; ii, 9-20; chapter iii entire, has been denied to the prophet Habakkuk. If the prophecy is interpreted properly (see above) no valid reason for the rejection of i, 5-11, can be found. Verses 9-20

of chapter ii are denied to Habakkuk chiefly on two grounds: 1. The "woes" are said to be, in part at least, unsuitable, if supposed to be addressed to the Chaldean king. 2. Some parts, especially verses 12-14, "consist largely of citations and reminiscences of other passages, including some late ones" (compare verse 12 with Mic. iii, 10; verse 13 with Jer. li, 58; verse 14 with Isa. xi, 9; 16b with Jer. xxv, 15, 16; verses 18-20 with Isa. xliv, 9ff.; xlvi, 6, 7; Jer. x, 1-16). On these grounds Stade, Kuenen, and others consider verses 9-20 an expansion, made in postexilic times, of an original "woe" in verses 6-8. Others, like Budde and Nowack, do not cast aside the entire section, but only small parts. In general it may be said—for details the comments on the separate verses should be read—that it is difficult to see how the reasons advanced against the authenticity of ii, 9-20, can be regarded conclusive in any sense. The argument from literary parallels is always precarious (see Joel, p. 136). In the present case the resemblances are few in number; in some instances, if any dependence exists, Habakkuk may be the borrower, for both Isaiah and Micah preceded him; other passages (for example, Jer. li, 58) look as if they were dependent upon Habakkuk. The remaining passages are few and the resemblances are of a character that do not necessarily presuppose literary dependence. The other objection is equally inconclusive. It may be admitted that the woes are not all applicable to the Chaldean king as an individual. But why should the prophet heap these woes upon him as an individual? The king is and can be condemned only as representing the policy of the nation; he may even be regarded as a personification of the nation. If so, the woes must be intended for the whole nation, and such interpretation removes all difficulties.

Chapter iii raises a more difficult problem, and this chapter is denied to the prophet with greater unanimity. Budde says, "To Stade belongs the credit of having first shown that the authorship of Habakkuk is on internal grounds *impossible*." If impossible, nothing more need be said on the subject. But

is it impossible? In the first place, it is urged against the originality of the chapter that it belongs to the psalm literature. The "prayer" undoubtedly has all the marks of a psalm, and it may be readily admitted that it is a psalm. The most important of these marks are, the use of the word *selāh* (three times, in the Psalter seventy-one times), the expressions "for the chief musician" (in the Psalter fifty-five times) and "on my stringed instruments" (occurring, without the pronoun, in five psalms), and "prayer" (verse 1) as the title of a poetic piece (in five psalms, compare also Psa. lxxii, 20). It may even be true that at one time this chapter was a part of a larger collection, and that it was used in public worship; but this again does not disprove the authorship of Habakkuk, unless we accept the extreme view of a few modern scholars that there is no preëxilic psalm literature. If the possibility of preëxilic psalm composition is once granted—and the present writer thinks that this must be done, when all the facts are carefully considered—the abstract possibility of Habakkuk being a psalm writer cannot be denied. Certainly, the testimony of the title does not settle the question finally; it occupies the same position as the psalm titles in the Psalter, which, as is generally admitted, cannot be followed implicitly; their accuracy must be tested by any criteria that may be at hand, such as historical allusions, style, the relation to other writers whose dates are known, and the character of the religious ideas expressed, but we are not warranted in casting them aside without this careful examination. This care must be exercised in the examination of the prayer of Habakkuk. Its linguistic peculiarities do not point necessarily to a late date. It is undoubtedly true that "to the circumstances of Habakkuk's age, so clearly reflected in chapters i, ii, there are here no allusions"; on the other hand, it is equally true that there are no allusions pointing clearly to circumstances different from those of Habakkuk's period, with the possible exception of verses 16ff., which seem to allude to a calamity other than the invasion of the Chaldeans; and Driver says,

not without reason, "Had the poet been writing under the pressure of a hostile invasion, the invasion itself would naturally have been expected to form the prominent feature in this picture." The difference in style as compared with that of the first two chapters is indecisive, because the latter are written in prose, and the poetic style of an author may differ greatly from that employed in prose writings.

The literary productions which are related most closely to this chapter in substance, form, and style are Exod. xv, Deut. xxxiii, Judg. v—all coming from periods earlier than that of Habakkuk. So far as the religious conceptions are concerned, there is again in the chapter nothing that may be considered an evidence of a late date.

Hence, while it may be impossible to prove that Habakkuk is the author of the "prayer," it is equally impossible to prove that he is not; and while there are a few indications which seem to point to a situation different from that of Habakkuk, these are by no means definite enough to exclude the possibility of Habakkuk's authorship. In the absence of conclusive evidence to the contrary, it has been thought only proper to treat, in this commentary, the "prayer" as an original part of Habakkuk's prophecies.

Contents, Outline, and Teaching.

1. *Contents.*—Though the contents have been touched upon in the section dealing with the interpretation of the book, it may be useful to give in this place a connected statement of the contents according to the interpretation adopted in this commentary.

The prophecy opens with a complaint about the seeming indifference of Jehovah in the presence of widespread corruption in Judah. The prophet is perplexed, for he cannot reconcile this indifference with his conception of the character of Jehovah (i, 2-4). In reply Jehovah declares that judgment is about to be executed, the executioners are to be the Chaldeans, "that bitter and hasty nation, that march through the breadth

of the earth" (5-11). This announcement, instead of quieting the prophet's perplexity, only intensifies it. Can a holy God look in silence upon the cruelties perpetrated by the Chaldeans? Judah, indeed, does deserve punishment, but how can the pure and righteous Jehovah employ as his executioners the godless Chaldeans? Is Judah to be utterly annihilated by this monster? Is the triumph of the Chaldeans to continue forever? These and similar questions present a new problem, which taxes his faith (12-17). But he will not permit his faith to be wrecked; he will wait until he receives a divine solution (ii, 1). The prophet does not wait in vain. Jehovah grants a solution in the form of an inner vision, which is to be made known to all: "Write the vision, and make it plain upon tablets, that he may run that readeth it" (2). The writing down is necessary because the fulfillment will be delayed until the "appointed time." When the latter appears the tablet will testify to the truthfulness of Jehovah and of his prophet (3).

The contents of the vision are stated in brief enigmatical form: "Behold, his soul is puffed up, it is not upright in him; but the righteous shall live by his faith." The meaning of this message is that there is a moral distinction between the Chaldeans and the people of Jehovah: the one, puffed up, glorying in his own might as his god, insincere in his dealings with other nations, lacks the moral elements which alone insure permanence, while the other possesses the fidelity and moral integrity which insure him permanence; he cannot perish, he will endure forever (4). Bearing in mind this moral distinction, the prophet may rest assured that in the end the righteous Jew will triumph, while the ungodly Chaldean must perish. There follows a verse which describes more fully the character of the Chaldeans (5).

The doom of the cruel oppressor is determined in the divine councils, therefore the wronged nations may begin to rejoice over his downfall. These nations the prophet introduces as taking up a taunt-song against the doomed Chaldeans. It

is in the form of five woes upon the evil traits in the enemy's character and upon his deeds of cruelty: (1) Upon lust of conquest and plunder (6-8); (2) upon rapacity (9-11); (3) upon the building of cities with the blood and property of strangers (12-14); (4) upon cruelty toward conquered kings and nations (15-17); (5) upon idolatry (18-20).

The prophecy closes with a lyrical passage (iii, 1-19), called in the title "prayer." In a broad sense the entire chapter is a prayer, though only verse 2 contains a petition, "O Jehovah, revive thy work in the midst of the years; in the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy." The petitioner speaks for himself and the community. He remembers the mighty works of Jehovah for his people; the thought of them causes him to tremble; yet he prays for a repetition of these ancient works (2). In majestic pictures the poet describes the wonderful manifestations of Jehovah in the past; he came forth in awful brightness; nature and men trembled before him; the rivers and the sea were dried up; the sun and the moon hid themselves in terror (3-11). All this was done "for the salvation of thine anointed" (12-15). In the remaining verses the psalmist describes the feelings within himself at the remembrance of these manifestations: at first, fear and trembling (16a), then joy and confidence in the God of his salvation. Whatever the temporary hardships and wants, Jehovah is his portion, and in due time he will prove himself the God of his salvation (16b-19).

Only the Hebrew student can get an adequate idea of the literary excellence of the Book of Habakkuk. "The literary power of Habakkuk," says Driver, "is considerable. Though his book is a brief one, it is full of force; his descriptions are graphic and powerful; thought and expression are alike poetic; he is still a master of the old classical style, terse, parallelistic, pregnant; there is no trace of the often prosaic diffusiveness which manifests itself in the writings of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. And if chapter iii be his, he is, moreover, a lyric poet of high order; the grand imagery and the rhythmic flow of this ode

will bear comparison with some of the finest productions of the Hebrew muse."

2. *Outline.*—

TITLE—THE AUTHOR.....Chap. i, 1
I. THE PROPHET'S PERPLEXITY; THE DIVINE SOLUTION.....i, 2—ii, 5
1. The prophet's perplexity: How can Jehovah justify his indifference in the presence of wickedness and violence?.....i, 2-4
2. Jehovah's reply: He is not indifferent; the well-merited judgment is about to be executed by the Chaldeans.. .....i, 5-11
3. A new perplexity: How can a holy God employ an impure and godless agent?.....i, 12-17
4. God's final reply: The Chaldeans, though temporarily exalted, will meet certain doom; the righteous, though temporarily afflicted, will live forever..ii, 1-5
II. TAUNT-SONG OVER THE DOWNFALL OF THE CHALDEANS....ii, 6-20
1. Woe upon lust of conquest and plunder.....ii, 6-8
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III. THE PRAYER OF HABAKKUK.....iii, 1-19
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(2) Question: Why did Jehovah appear?..iii, 8-12
(3) Answer: For the salvation of his people..... .....iii, 13-15
4. The poet's confidence in Jehovah, the God of his salvation.....iii, 16-19

3. *Teaching.*—Habakkuk has been called "the prophet of faith." He possessed a strong, living faith in Jehovah; but he, like many other pious souls, was troubled and perplexed by the apparent inequalities and inconsistencies of life. He found it difficult to reconcile these with his lofty conception of Jehovah. Nevertheless, he does not sulk; boldly he presents

his perplexity to Jehovah, who points the way to a solution, and the prophet comes forth from the struggle with a faith stronger and more intense than ever. An admirable description of him is given in the words of Tennyson:

Perplexed in faith, but pure in deeds,
At last he beat his music out.
There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds.

He fought his doubts and gathered strength,
He would not make his judgment blind,
He faced the specters of the mind
And laid them; thus he came at length

To find a stronger faith his own,
And Power was with him in the night,
Which makes the darkness and the light,
And dwells not in the light alone,

But in the darkness and the cloud,
As over Sinai's peaks of old,
While Israel made their gods of gold,
Although the trumpet blew so loud.

We might expect that a man with such firm hold on God, with such living experience of God, would give expression, even in a brief book, to some great and permanent religious truths; and in this instance our expectations are not disappointed. Habakkuk was a contemporary of Jeremiah, but he differs from him in a marked manner. Jeremiah is forever denouncing the sins of the people; of the Chaldeans he speaks almost exclusively as instruments of Jehovah; he has little to say about their cruelties and does not condemn them. Habakkuk, on the other hand, devotes only three verses (i, 2-4) to the sins of Judah; and, while recognizing the Chaldeans as instruments of Jehovah, he condemns them persistently for their wrongdoing, and the climax of the prophecy is the promise of their ultimate annihilation. In this the prophet resembles Nahum, who, like Habakkuk, was concerned primarily with the cruelties and the doom of the oppressor.

It is in connection with his attempts to solve the perplexing

problems raised by the unpunished sins of his countrymen and the unlimited success of the godless Chaldeans that Habakkuk gives utterance to two sublime truths: 1. The universality of the moral government of Jehovah. The latter is interested not only in Israel; though, like the other prophets, Habakkuk believes in a special divine providence over Israel; his rule embraces the whole earth; the destinies of all the nations are in his hand. The Chaldeans are punished not merely for their sins against Israel, but for the oppression of other nations as well. Being the only God, he cannot permit the worship of other gods. Temporarily the Chaldeans may worship idols (ii, 18-20) or make *might* their god; they may "sacrifice unto their nets" and burn incense "unto their drag," because by them "their portion is fat and their food plenteous"; but Jehovah is from everlasting, the Holy One, and he will attest his supremacy by utterly destroying the boastful conqueror with his idols. 2. The second important truth is expressed in ii, 4, "The righteous shall live by his faithfulness." Faithfulness assures permanency. The thought expressed by the prophet is not identical with that expressed by the apostle who quotes the words (Gal. iii, 11); nevertheless the former expresses a truth of profound significance (for details see comments). "Faithfulness" is with the prophet, in a sense, an external thing; it signifies integrity, fidelity, steadfastness in righteousness under all provocations; but this implies, in a real sense, the New Testament conception of "faith" as an active principle of right conduct. A living faith determines conduct; religion and ethics go hand in hand, and especially in the hour of adversity a belief in Jehovah and unflinching reliance upon him are the strongest preservers of fidelity and integrity. Faith without works is dead; faith expresses itself in life. Habakkuk places chief emphasis upon the *expressions* of faith, and he does so rightly; but in doing so he also calls attention, by implication at least, to the motive power behind the external manifestations. As an expression of living faith iii, 17-19, is without superior in the Old Testament.

HABAKKUK.

CHAPTER I.

THE burden which Habakkuk the prophet did see. 2 O LORD, how long shall I cry, [a]and thou wilt not hear! *even* cry out unto thee *of* violence, and thou wilt not save! 3 Why dost thou show me iniquity, and cause *me* to behold

[a] Lam. 3. 8.

CHAPTER I.

1. *The title.* **Burden**—See on Nah. i, 1 (compare "take up," ii, 6). **Habakkuk**—See Introduction, p. 463. **Did see**—During the earlier period of Israelitish history dreams and visions appear to have been common vehicles of divine revelation (Num. xii, 6); and it was during that period that the prophetic terminology originated. In the early days the prophets "did see" and "had visions," but during the golden age of Hebrew prophecy dreams and visions became less common; the ancient terminology, however, was retained (compare ii, 1–4; Nah. i, 1; Amos i, 1; Mic. i, 1, etc.).

THE PROPHET'S PERPLEXITY, 2–4.

For a long time the prophet had watched the wickedness of his people. Surely they deserved severe punishment, but none came. He found it difficult to reconcile this apparent indifference on the part of Jehovah with his conception of the divine holiness. In his perplexity he cries out to Jehovah.

2. **How long shall I cry**—Literally, *have I cried.* The Hebrew verb implies the idea "for help," that is, to bring about a change in the terrible condition in which the prophet finds himself. **Cry out unto thee of violence**—A further description of the prophet's cry; literally, *I cry unto thee violence.* The substance of his cry is the violence of his countrymen; the noun denotes wrongdoing and injury of every kind (Job xix, 7; Jer. xx, 8). Though the prophet has cried again and again, Jehovah has paid no attention. **Hear . . . save**—The fact that Jehovah did not interfere in behalf of the oppressed seemed conclusive evidence that he did not hear the prophet's cry. It is not to be supposed that the prophet was the only one in Judah who still cried to Jehovah; but because of his intimate fellowship with Jehovah he felt the unrighteousness most keenly; besides, like his contemporary Jeremiah, he may have had to suffer in his own person from the ungodly. The cry uttered by him must have found an echo in the hearts of all who remained loyal to Jehovah.

The prophet's perplexity finds further expression in verse 3. **Why dost thou show me iniquity**—The Hebrew word translated "iniquity" is used sometimes with the meaning "affliction," but more frequently, as here, of moral evil and wickedness (compare Num. xxiii, 21). This moral evil the prophet is compelled to look upon, but he is convinced that Jehovah has power to stop it, and since he takes no steps toward this he is responsible for its presence. But how can a holy God remain silent in the presence of evil? A serious problem indeed (see on Amos iii, 6; iv, 6–11; compare Job xxiii, 16, 17). **Grievance**—R. V., "perverseness." Primarily, labor, toil; in a secondary sense, trouble or distress experienced as a result of oppression or injustice. Here the distress caused by the "violent"

grievance? for spoiling and violence *are* before me: and there are *that* raise up strife and contention. 4 Therefore the law is slacked, and judgment doth never go forth: for the [b]wicked doth compass about the righteous; therefore [1]wrong judgment proceedeth.

5 [c]Behold ye among the heathen, and regard, and wonder marvelously: for *I* will work a work in your days, *which* ye will not believe,

[b] Job 21. 7; Psa. 94. 3, etc.; Jer. 12. 1.

[1] Or, *wrested.*—[c] Isa. 29. 14; Acts 13. 41.

and suffered by the oppressed (Isa. x, 1). **Spoiling**—R. V., "destruction." Violent treatment resulting in destruction. **Violence**—Malicious conduct to injure another. The two words are frequently combined (Amos iii, 10; Jer. vi, 7; xx, 8). **Strife and contention**—Among the members of the Jewish nation; the result of violent and wicked conduct.

The consequence of all this is a state of anarchy, described in verse 4. **Therefore**—Because Jehovah has allowed wickedness to proceed unhindered. **The law**—See on Hos. iv, 6. Here the term includes the revealed will of Jehovah concerning life and conduct, whatever the method of making it known, or the form in which it existed. **Is slacked**—Literally, *has become numb;* has lost its vitality and efficiency. **Judgment**—The word means sometimes a legal decision; if so here, a legal decision to put an end to wickedness and injustice. It might be rendered also, with R. V., "justice," that is, a righteous and equitable state of things in the civic and political life. **Doth never go forth**—An obscure expression. Margin R. V. offers as an alternative, "goeth not forth unto victory." This rendering is based upon the explanation of the word translated "forever" ("never" *minus* the negative) in the sense of truth, with which translation may be compared Isa. xlii, 3, "justice in truth," reproduced in Matt. xii, 20, "judgment unto victory." It is better, however, to retain the ordinary rendering "not forever" or "never." The thought of the clause seems to be: In the present hopeless condition there is no prospect that order, or civic and political righteousness, will ever manifest itself again.

Instead of a causal clause 4b might be understood (G.-K., 148d) as an exclamation, "Indeed, the wicked doth compass about the righteous!" In a hostile sense (Job iii, 23; not as in Psa. cxlii, 7). The two nouns are used in a collective sense of two classes within the nation (see Introduction, p. 467; Isa. iii, 10, 11; v, 23; Zeph. i, 3). In later times it became customary to refer to heathen oppressors as the wicked in distinction from the righteous Israel. The godless in Israel encompassed the righteous to destroy them. **Wrong judgment proceedeth**—R. V., "justice goeth forth perverted." It is the constant complaint of the prophets that under the guise of law rankest injustice was done (Amos v, 7; Isa. i, 23; Jer. xxii, 16, 17, etc.).

Jehovah's Reply to the Prophet's Perplexed Cry, 5–11.

Jehovah meets the perplexity of his servant by declaring that he is not indifferent, and that punishment is about to be meted out by his agents, the Chaldeans, a terrible and dreadful nation, before which nothing can stand. **Behold ye among the heathen**—R. V., "nations." If this is the correct reading the prophet and the people are addressed; they are to look about among the nations to see the wonderful things Jehovah is about to accomplish. LXX. and Peshitto read "ye despisers" for "among the nations." If this is original, as is not impossible, the "wicked" of verse 4 are addressed. **Wonder marvelously**—LXX. adds "and perish." Why are they to look and wonder? **I will work**—R. V., "I am working"; margin, which produces the Hebrew more accurately, "one worketh." However, the ordinary translation is not impossible, and the context (verse 6) makes the translation "I" almost certain.

though it be told *you*. 6 For, lo, [d] [2]I raise up the Chaldeans, *that* bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the [3]breadth of the land, to possess the dwelling places *that are* not theirs. 7 They *are* terrible and dreadful: [4]their judgment and their dignity shall proceed of themselves. 8 Their horses also are swifter than the leopards, and are more [5]fierce than the [e]evening wolves: and their horsemen shall spread themselves, and their horsemen shall come from far; [f]they shall

[d] Deut. 28. 49, 50; Jer. 5. 15.—[2] Fulfilled, 2 Chron. 36. 6.—[3] Heb. *breadths*.—[4] Or, *from them shall proceed the judgment of these, and the captivity of these.*—[5] Heb. *sharp*.—[e] Jer. 5. 6; Zeph. 3. 3.—[f] Jer. 4. 13.

The rendering "I am about to work" would express more clearly the idea of imminence. **Which ye will not believe, though it be told you**—Better, *which ye would not believe though (if) it were told you;* that is, as having occurred in another place and at some other time. The event will be so extraordinary that only eyewitnesses can believe it (compare Acts xiii, 41).

The awful thing Jehovah is about to do is stated in verses 6ff. **I raise up the Chaldeans**—Better, *I am about to raise up* (G.-K., 116p). On *Chaldeans* see Introduction, pp. 468ff, and Nahum, p. 431. The reference is not to the first appearance of the Chaldeans in history or as a world power, for the following verses indicate that they were already well known as cruel, bloodthirsty conquerors, but to their first advance against Judah; they will be summoned by Jehovah to execute judgment upon the wicked (verse 4). Some manuscripts of LXX. add "against you." **Bitter**—Rough, or fierce (Judg. xviii, 25; 2 Sam. xvii, 8). **Hasty**—Violent; "driven headlong by violent impulse" (Isa. xxxii, 4). As world conquerors they march through the whole extent of the earth and take possession of territories not their own (ii, 6; Deut. vi, 10, 11).

Verse 7 depicts further the fierce disposition of the Chaldeans. The nation is personified as a hero, hence the Hebrew has the singular pronoun (see margin). **Terrible**—Exciting terror (Song of Songs vi, 4, 10). **Dreadful**—Creating alarm. This is the word ordinarily translated "terrible" in the Old Testament. **Their judgment**—The decisions determining their conduct (Psa. xvii, 2). **Dignity**—Or, *eminence;* the sovereignty which they assume over the nations of the world (Gen. xlix, 3; Hos. xiii, 1). **Proceed of themselves**—They acknowledge no superior, not even Jehovah, to determine their course for them. According to their own pleasure they map out their plans and through the power of their own arms they overthrow the nations.

Verse 8 describes the irresistible advance of their armies (compare Jer. iv, 13; v, 6). **Their horses also are swifter than the leopards**—Tristram describes the leopard as "agile, swift, and when irritated the most terrible and cruel of beasts." In Jer. iv, 13, the expression is "swifter than eagles"; Habakkuk mentions the eagle later in the verse. **More fierce**—Literally, *more sharp.* The war horses share their masters' ferocity. Wildly they dash against the foe. **Evening wolves**—The wolves that, after fasting all day, go out in the evening to seek prey; prompted by intense hunger they are especially fierce. LXX., with a slight change of vowels, reads "wolves of Arabia," which is less suitable (compare Zeph. iii, 3). **Spread themselves**—R. V., "press proudly on." The verb is connected with an Arabic root meaning "to strut proudly"; when used of horsemen it means "to spring along," "to gallop." Nothing can stop the onslaught of their horsemen. **Their horsemen shall come from far**—The horsemen of the Chaldeans came from the far east. Several commentators are inclined to omit this clause as a marginal gloss to the preceding, because (1) LXX. omits "horsemen"; (2) the repetition of "horsemen" in two successive clauses seems peculiar; (3) the presence of this clause gives an unequal number

fly as the eagle *that* hasteth to eat. **9** They shall come all for violence: [6] [7]their faces shall sup up *as* the east wind, and they shall gather the captivity as the sand. **10** And they shall scoff at the kings, and the princes shall be a scorn unto them: they shall deride every strong hold; for they shall heap dust, and take it. **11** Then shall *his* mind change, and he shall pass over, and offend, [8]*imputing* this his power unto his god.

[6] Or, *the supping up of their faces*, etc., or, *their faces shall look toward the east.*

[7] Heb. *the opposition of their faces toward the east.*——[8] Dan. 5. 4.

of clauses, and thus injures the parallelism. Others consider this the original clause and the preceding the gloss. Nowack and others make more thoroughgoing changes and read verse 8, "And swifter than leopards are their (literally, *his*) horses, and swifter on foot than the evening wolves their horsemen; (and their horsemen come from afar;) they fly as an eagle that hasteth to devour." As an eagle or vulture (see on Mic. i, 16) swoops upon a carcass, so the Chaldean horsemen swoop upon their human prey.

9. Their purpose is to rob and to destroy. **For violence**—They are without humane feelings; their only object is to do violence. **Their faces shall sup up as the east wind**—R. V., "the set of their faces is forwards"; margin, "the eagerness of their faces is towards the east." A. V. attempts to get from the original the thought that the Chaldeans will devour everything like the destructive east wind (Hos. xiii, 15); R. V., that their faces are set forward and cannot be turned aside; so also margin R. V. The Hebrew is obscure and the English translations all do more or less violence to it. The original has *east*, "but as the spectator when reckoning the quarters of the heavens faces the east, it is supposed that eastwards became equivalent to forwards or onwards." The intention of the prophet is evidently to describe the fierceness of the advance, but it is not unlikely that the text has suffered in transmission. Nowack considers the corruption so hopeless that he does not even attempt a restoration; Marti reads, "They advance in the very face of those who rise up against them"; that is, they are without fear or hesitation. Their captives are "as the sand," which means numberless. The Assyrian kings frequently boast that they took captives and booty "without number."

The verbs of verses 10, 11 should be rendered, with R. V. in verse 10, as *present* tenses. Kings and princes are objects of mockery to them, fortresses are taken with the greatest ease. **They shall heap dust** ["he heapeth up dust"]—Refers to the casting up of embankments, so that the besiegers may be on a level with the defenders behind the walls (2 Sam. xx, 15; Jer. xxxii, 24). This is done quickly, and the city falls.

In verse 11 the translation of A. V. is not impossible, but the context favors R. V.: "Then he shall sweep by as a wind, and shall pass over, and be guilty, even he whose might is his god." **Then**—With the fortresses leveled to the ground the victorious army rushes on like a wind to new triumphs. **He passeth over**—Irresistibly they sweep through the lands overcoming all obstacles. The two verbs are used together in Isa. viii, 8, of the onward rush of the Assyrians, likened to an overwhelming flood. The translation of margin R. V., "transgresseth," is not so suitable. **Be guilty** (R.V.)—Through the acts just described, equivalent to "and thus he becometh guilty." The cruelties and outrages constitute a part of their guilt. Another indictment is implied in the last clause. **Even he whose might is his god** (R. V.)—This is not a literal translation, but it expresses the thought of the original: "His success intoxicates him, and in his pride of heart he deifies his own might." Literally it is, "this his might becometh his god"; the construction is peculiar, and the text may be corrupt. For "and be guilty, even he whose might

12 [h]Art thou not from everlasting,
O LORD my God, mine Holy One?

[h] Psa. 90. 2; 93. 2; Lam. 5. 19.

we shall not die. O LORD, [i]thou
hast ordained them for judgment;

[i] 2 Kings 19. 25; Psa. 17. 13; Isa. 10. 5–7; Ezek. 30. 25.

is his god," Wellhausen, Nowack, and others read, with some changes in the text, "and he maketh his might to be his god," which gives good sense.

THE GREATER PERPLEXITY, 12–17.

In the beginning the prophet was troubled because Jehovah seemed to look with indifference upon corruption; Jehovah replied that judgment was about to fall, that the Chaldeans were about to include Judah in their conquests. This announcement was accompanied by a recognition of the fierce and brutal character of the Chaldeans and their warfare; hence, far from calming the prophet's doubts, it only intensified them. Can a holy God, he asks, look in silence upon the wrongs and cruelties perpetrated by the Chaldeans? Judah does, indeed, deserve judgment, but how can Jehovah send the godless Chaldeans to execute it? Is Judah to be annihilated by this monster? Is the triumph of the cruel world conqueror to continue forever? These and similar questions perplex the prophet, and in i, 12–17, we have a description of his struggle with the new problem, which taxes his faith to the uttermost.

12. The prophet begins with an expression of confidence in his God. A better arrangement of the words would be:

Art not thou from everlasting, O Jehovah?
My God, my Holy One, not shall we die!

The first line is not an expression of despondency or doubt, but a rhetorical question to pave the way for the expression of confidence in the second line. **From everlasting**—Literally, *from aforetime.* The Hebrew word denotes an ancient period rather than eternity in the modern sense of that term; it is used often of the Mosaic age or ther periods in Israel's past (compare Mic. vii, 20; Psa. xliv, 1); even of a former period in a single lifetime (Job xxix, 2). The exact meaning in a given passage must be determined from the context. Allusion is frequently made to the eternity of Jehovah as a ground of confidence in him (Deut. xxxiii, 27; Isa. xl, 28; Psa. xc, 2). The English versions arrange the words differently; and some commentators understand them as equivalent to "Art not thou from everlasting my Holy One, O Jehovah, my God?" This arrangement gives to the words a meaning different from that which is indicated above. According to it the prophet is the spokesman of the people, expressing their confidence based not upon Jehovah's eternity but upon the fact that he has been from everlasting *the Holy One of Israel* (see on Hos. xi, 9), a title of Jehovah very common in Isaiah. As the *holy one* he is bound to sweep away the wicked Chaldeans. **We shall not die**—We shall not be utterly annihilated by the foe which is to be raised up (verse 6). The everlasting God will somehow preserve his people. According to Jewish tradition "we shall not die" is an *emendation of the scribes* for "thou (Jehovah) shalt not die." To speak of Jehovah in connection with death, even to deny his dying, was considered blasphemy by the scribes, therefore they changed the original into the present reading. If the second person is original the second line becomes simply a reiteration of the thought of the first line. The eighteen *emendations of the scribes* mentioned in Jewish tradition still present difficulties; in the present passage the Masoretic text is preferable. 12b passes to the complaint. Jehovah being the Holy One, his appointment of the godless Chaldeans as instruments of judgment creates a moral difficulty. **For judgment . . . for**

and, O [8]mighty God, thou hast [9]established them for correction. **13** [k]*Thou art* of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on [10]iniquity: [l]wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, *and* hôldest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth *the man that is* more righteous than he? **14** And makest men as the fishes of the sea,

[8] Heb. *rock*, Deut. 32. 4.——[9] Heb. *founded*.——[k] Psa. 5. 5.——[10] Or, *grievance*.——[l] Jer. 12. 1.——[11] Or, *moving*.——[m] Jer. 16.

as the [11]creeping things, *that have* no ruler over them? **15** They [m]take up all of them with the angle, they catch them in their net, and gather them in their [12]drag: therefore they rejoice and are glad. **16** Therefore [n]they sacrifice unto their net, and burn incense unto their drag: because by them their portion *is* fat, and their meat [13]plenteous. **17** Shall

16; Amos 4. 2.——[12] Or, *flue net*.——[n] Deut. 8. 17; Isa. 10. 13; 37. 24, 25.——[13] Or, *dainty*.

correction—Either to execute judgment upon him and to administer correction to him, or, perhaps better, that he may execute punishment upon Judah and the other nations.

The perplexity caused by the appointment alluded to in 12b is further described in verse 13. Can the exaltation of a wicked and violent nation be harmonized with the belief in a holy and pure God? The present attitude seems to contradict the prophet's conception of the divine character. He has always thought of God as too pure to look upon moral evil and perverseness; since he now selects the most wicked nation as his executioner, the prophet feels justified in challenging Jehovah to defend himself. **Deal treacherously**—The Chaldeans are unscrupulous, treacherous, and tyrannical. Is it right for Jehovah to look upon them with favor? Is it right that he should remain silent while they practice wickedness? **The man . . . more righteous than he**—With all their wickedness the people of Jehovah are better than the Chaldeans. How, then, can Jehovah justify himself for making the present choice? The same perplexed questioning is continued in verse 14. Wherefore does Jehovah permit the outrages of the Chaldeans? **Makest men as the fishes of the sea**—Defenseless, without rights, readily taken by the skillful fisherman. **As the creeping things**—Despised, and without a protector to take an interest in their well-being. **That have no ruler over them**—The relative is to be taken with "fishes" and with "creeping things." They scatter in every direction when danger approaches; no ruler or commander directs their movements. So the nations are reduced to a state of confusion when they learn of the approach of the Chaldeans (compare Isa. x, 13, 14). Jehovah controls the movements of the Chaldeans, and is in a sense responsible for their conduct; but if they have gone beyond the divine commission (Isa. xlvii, 6, 7; compare x, 7) why does he not interfere?

15. So far as the prophet can see, Jehovah looks with favor upon their conquests, for they are successful in all their undertakings. The Chaldean armies are personified as a fisherman who makes extraordinary hauls and rejoices greatly in his success. 16. When he sees this wonderful success he makes the implements that have assisted him his gods and pays homage to them; he loses sight entirely of Him under whose direction he acts. **Net, . . . drag**—An expansion of the comparison in verses 14, 15. The net and the drag represent the weapons and means used by the conqueror to subdue the nations (verse 11). Whether the words imply that the Chaldeans, like the Scythians (Herodotus, iv, 59, 62), offered sacrifices to their swords, or whether they are only a vivid picture of the glorification and deification of their might, cannot be determined. **Meat**—Better, R. V., "food." Through the conquests wealth and prosperity have been acquired.

17. In verses 7–11 Jehovah is introduced as describing the terribleness of the Chaldean armies; in verses 12ff.

they therefore empty their net, and not spare continually to slay the nations?

CHAPTER II.

I WILL [a]stand upon my watch, and set me upon the [1]tower, [b]and will watch to see what he will

[a] Isa. 21. 8, 11.——[1] Heb. *fenced place.*——[b] Psa. 85. 8.——[2] Or, *in me.*——[3] Or, *when I am argued with.*

say [2]unto me, and what I shall answer [3] [4]when I am reproved. 2 And the LORD answered me, and said, [c]Write the vision, and make *it* plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. 3 For [d]the vision *is* yet for an appointed time,

[4] Heb. *upon my reproof*, or, *arguing*——[c] Isa. 8. 1; 30. 8.——[d] Dan. 10. 14; 11. 27, 35.

the prophet questions Jehovah, how his attitude toward them can be harmonized with his holiness. Their success in the past has been perplexing enough; how can the prophet explain the new commission intrusted to them? **Shall they therefore empty their nets**—Of the fish already caught, so that they may prepare for a new haul. In the last clause the prophet discontinues the use of figurative language, and inquires whether the Chaldeans are to be permitted to continue forever in their career of violence.

The prophet is, indeed, perplexed. Is there no solution? He is not yet ready to give up, and determines to await a divine solution.

CHAPTER II.

THE PROPHET'S ANXIOUS WATCH; THE DIVINE SOLUTION, 1–5.

1. The prophet carries out his determination to secure a divine solution. **Watch, . . . tower**—The two clauses are not to be understood literally, as if the prophet had an elevated place or tower where, away from the noise, he might look toward heaven for a revelation; they are meant figuratively. As the watchman gazes into the distance from his watchtower (2 Sam. xviii, 24; 2 Kings ix, 17), so the prophet will watch intently for an answer from heaven (Isa. xxi, 8). **Watch to see**—R. V., "look forth to see." From the root of the verb used here is derived one of the titles of the prophets, *watchman* (Jer. vi, 17; Ezek. iii, 17). **What I shall answer**—First of all, to himself; then, to others who would be sure to consult the prophet concerning the significance of passing events. Peshitto reads, "what he (Jehovah) will answer," which brings the clause into closer parallelism with the preceding, and is therefore accepted as original by many commentators. **When I am reproved**—Better, with R. V., "concerning my complaint," as expressed in i, 12–17.

2. The prophet gazes not in vain. **Vision**—See on Nah. i, 1. Jehovah grants an answer in the form of an inner vision, but since the solution is intended for all who might be troubled in a similar manner, the prophet is exhorted to make it known to all by writing it upon tablets where the people could read it. **Tables**—Literally, *the tablets;* either tablets such as are commonly used for inscriptions set up in public places, or tablets such as the prophet was accustomed to use for these or similar purposes. **Make it plain**—Because it is an important message (compare Isa. viii, 1). **That he may run that readeth it**—It is to be written so plainly that anyone hurrying by may read it, without being compelled to stop and study. There is no reason for doubting that the command was to be understood and carried out literally. Keil's view, that "the words simply express the thought that the prophecy is to be laid to heart by all the people on account of its great importance, and that not merely in the present but in the future also," does scant justice to the statements in verses 2, 3.

Verse 3 indicates the reason for the command. The writing down of the vision is necessary, because its fulfillment will be delayed; when it is fulfilled the tablets will serve as witnesses to the truthfulness of Jehovah and of his prophet (compare Isa. viii, 16–18). **The vision is yet for an ap-**

but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will [e]surely come, it will not tarry. 4 Behold, his soul *which* is lifted up is not upright in him: but the [f]just shall live by his faith.

[e] Heb. 10. 37.—[f] John 3. 36; Rom. 1. 17; Gal. 3. 11; Heb. 10 38.

pointed time—It relates not to the present but to the time fixed by Jehovah for its realization, which is yet in the future (compare Dan. viii, 19, 26; x, 14, etc.). **At the end it shall speak**—Better, R. V., "it hasteth toward the end." The end is not the "last days," nor the fulfillment of the vision as such, but the time fixed for it. The oracle is thought of as possessing a vital energy of its own. "True prophecy," says Hitzig, "is inspired, as it were, by an impulse to fulfill itself." **Not lie**—It will not prove false, but will surely be realized. In the rest of the verse the prophet is exhorted to wait patiently, for, though delayed, the vision will surely be realized.

Verse 4 contains the oracle that the prophet is to write down. It is brief and enigmatic, but not unintelligible. 4a is translated more satisfactorily in R. V., "Behold his soul is puffed up, it is not upright in him." These words apply to the Chaldean. The righteous, or rather the destiny of the righteous, is described in the second part of the verse. Though in the one case the reference is to character, in the other to destiny, there seems insufficient reason for suspecting the accuracy of the text; the various emendations suggested do not improve it. **Lifted up** ["puffed up"] . . . **not upright**—His successes and conquests have made him proud, presumptuous, insincere, and treacherous in his dealings with other nations. This is all the oracle says, but comparison with the second clause enables us to complete the thought. Because the Chaldean is puffed up, glories in his might alone, and is insincere and treacherous, he lacks the principles and elements which alone assure permanence; he is doomed to perish. If destruction overtakes the Chaldeans in the end, the problem of the prophet is at least partly solved.

The second clause continues the solution. **The just** ["righteous"] **shall live by his faith**—Margin R. V., "in his faithfulness." The righteous of this verse is identical with the "righteous" of i, 13, whose present and imminent lot causes the complaint of the prophet. While it is to be understood primarily of the righteous in Israel, it includes also those among the nations oppressed by the Chaldeans; and the assertion is equally true of the righteous everywhere and in all ages. "We shall not die" was Habakkuk's cry of confidence (i, 12); Jehovah responds with a definite promise of life. Temporarily the ways of Jehovah may seem unintelligible, but a time of reckoning will come, when the godless oppressor will meet his doom, while the faithful oppressed, now delivered, will rejoice in new life. This is the vision and with it is joined the promise (verse 3) that it will surely be realized. The prophet seems satisfied.

In Gal. iii, 11, Paul quotes the words of Habakkuk, but the Hebrew word here translated "faith" or "faithfulness" is not quite identical in meaning with the New Testament expression, which denotes faith as an active, inner principle of the spiritual life. In fact, the Hebrew has no word that exactly expresses the New Testament idea of faith. The Hebrew word means steadfastness, moral trustworthiness, fidelity, integrity of character under all provocations; but since these virtues in the case of the Israelites, especially in the time of adversity, would spring chiefly from their loyalty to Jehovah, their confidence in him, and their trust in the ultimate triumph of the good, the New Testament idea is not foreign to the Old Testament expression. For the righteous his integrity and fidelity consti-

5 [5]Yea also, because he transgresseth by wine, *he is* a proud man, neither keepeth at home, who enlargeth his desire [g]as hell, and *is* as death, and cannot be satisfied, but gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth unto him all people: 6 Shall not all these [h]take up a parable against him, and a taunting proverb against him, and say, [6]Woe to

[5] Or, *How much more.*—[g] Prov. 27. 20; 30. 16.—[h] Mic. 2. 4.—[6] Or, *Ho, he.*

tute elements of permanency; they cannot perish; they will endure forever. This, then, is the reply to the prophet's complaint: oppression, pride, insincerity will lead to destruction, integrity and faithfulness to life everlasting.

Verse 5 seems to be an oracle by itself, though in thought it is an expansion of verse 4a, describing, as it does, the character of the Chaldean. But, while the general import of the verse is clear, the interpretation of details is uncertain; and it seems almost beyond doubt that the text has suffered in transmission. A few simple changes would produce the following: "Yea, moreover, treacherous as wine is he, a haughty man, who keepeth not at home, who enlargeth his desire as Sheol; he is as death, and cannot be satisfied, but gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth unto him all peoples." These words are a description of the lust of conquest that impels the Chaldeans to overrun the whole earth and of the treachery they practice when dealing with other nations. **Hell**—Better, R. V., "Sheol." The abode of the departed; it is pictured here, as elsewhere, as a devouring, insatiable monster (see on Hos. xiii, 14; compare Isa. v, 14). As Sheol seeks to devour all, so the Chaldeans are not satisfied until all nations have become their prey.

Verse 5 marks the transition to the five woes in 6–20. Now the Chaldean is the triumphant conqueror, but his doom is determined in the heavenly councils; therefore the oppressed nations may begin their song of rejoicing over his downfall. The ancient Babylonian Kings took comparatively little interest in war; but the Chaldean power, which was the heir of Assyria, continued the latter's cruel policy.

Taunt-Song over the Fall of the Chaldeans, 6–20.

In ii, 6–20, the prophet introduces the nations that are now suffering from the oppressions of the Chaldeans as taking up a parable or song against the oppressor about to be crushed. The song is in the form of five woes upon (1) lust of conquest and plunder; (2) rapacity; (3) self-glorification; (4) oppression; (5) idolatry. These woes are placed in the mouth of the nations; in reality the prophet is the speaker.

First woe—upon lust of conquest and plunder, 6–8.

Verse 6a introduces the oppressed who will pronounce the woes. The utterances begin with "woe" in 6b. Throughout the *song* the Chaldean power is personified as an individual (see Introduction, p. 472). The nations will not submit forever. **All these**—All the wronged nations. **Against him**—The Chaldean oppressor. **Parable**—The primary meaning of the Hebrew word seems to be "likeness" or "identity"; hence it came to be applied to any saying containing a comparison or similitude. In a more general sense it is used of any figurative speech or song—in some places of a taunt-song (Isa. xiv, 4); so here. **Taunting proverb**—Literally, *a dark saying;* margin, "riddle"; here practically synonymous with the preceding, a taunt-song. The thought is that the nations will make the Chaldeans, as examples of fallen greatness and pride, objects of taunting proverbs and comparisons, such as are found in verses 6–20. **Woe**—With this word begins the first "parable." Each of the five is directed against a specific crime, the first against lust of con-

him that increaseth *that which is* not his! how long? and to him that ladeth himself with thick clay! 7 Shall they not rise up suddenly that shall bite thee, and awake that shall vex thee, and thou shalt be for

[i] Isa. 33. 1.—[k] Verse 17.

booties unto them? 8 [i]Because thou hast spoiled many nations, all the remnant of the people shall spoil thee; [k]because of men's [7]blood, and *for* the violence of the land, of the city, and of all that dwell therein.

[7] Heb. *bloods.*

quest and plunder. **Increaseth that which is not his**—He seizes the lands and possessions of other nations (compare i, 6, 9, 15). **How long?**—"A sigh appended to the woe." How long will he be permitted to carry out this policy? **Ladeth himself with thick clay**—This is a possible translation, but the context favors the reading of R. V., "with pledges." The wealth accumulated by the Chaldeans is represented as a mass of pledges which they have taken from the nations like merciless usurers. But the time will come when the plundered nations will rise in wrath and compel the Chaldeans to return these pledges to their proper owners. In this connection it may be interesting to compare the boast of Nebuchadnezzar: "I have amassed silver, gold, metals, precious stones of all kinds and of all values, a collection of objects of great price, immense treasures."

7. Retribution will surely come; the nations will not submit forever. **They . . . that shall bite thee**—The verb has a twofold meaning, "to bite" (Gen. xlix, 17; Num. xxi, 8, 9), and "to exact usury" (compare margin R. V.; Deut. xxiii, 20). Either sense fits admirably in this place. The use of ambiguous words is perfectly legitimate in a proverb-song. Since the verb is in the participial form it might be translated literally, "the biter" or "the (cruel) creditor." The nations are so called because, on the one hand, the Chaldeans have taken their possessions and thus have become their debtors; on the other, the nations will take vengeance, they will bite and harass them. **Vex thee**—Margin R. V., "toss thee to and fro." In Arabic the verb is used of the shaking of trees by the wind; here of the nations that will give the Chaldeans no rest or peace: they will drive them hither and thither until finally they will expel them from their possessions. **Shalt be for booties**—The wealth of the oppressor will fall into the hands of the angry nations.

Verse 8 justifies the destruction of the Chaldeans, which is only just retribution for the cruelties perpetrated by them. **All the remnant of the people**—A threefold interpretation is possible: (1) those of the subdued nations who have survived the oppression and slaughter; (2) the nations with the exception of the Chaldeans, with no reference to any previous contact with the latter (in this case the translation "rest" would be preferable to "remnant"); (3) the nations that were able to withstand the Chaldeans, in distinction from those that were conquered. The first is to be preferred. The oppressed nations will rise and throw off the yoke. **Men's blood**—The blood wantonly shed in the pursuit of a policy of conquest. **Violence**—See i, 9. **Land**—The reference is not to the land of Israel alone, but to the lands of all the nations that have suffered; hence, "land" must be understood in a collective sense, or the translation might be changed to "earth"; the whole earth has experienced their violence (Jer. l, 23; li, 7, 25). **City**—This cannot be restricted to Jerusalem or to any other particular city; it also is to be understood collectively. As the Chaldeans have spoiled others, so they will be spoiled in turn.

Woe upon rapacity, 9–11.

In this stanza the Chaldeans are represented as a covetous man who builds his house with blood and vio-

9 Woe to him that [1] [8]coveteth an evil covetousness to his house, that he may [m]set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the [9]power of evil! **10** Thou hast consulted shame to thy house by cutting off many people, and hast sinned *against* thy soul. **11** For the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the [10]beam out of the timber shall [11]answer it.

12 Woe to him that buildeth a

[1] Jer. 22. 13.—[8] Or, *gaineth an evil gain.*—[m] Jer. 49. 16; Obad. 4.

[9] Heb. *palm of the hand.*—[10] Or, *piece,* or, *fastening.*—[11] Or, *witness against it.*

lence, and seeks to store there all kinds of treasures, that he may be "delivered from the power of the evil," and be safe as a bird in his nest on high. But he cannot escape judgment; the very stones and beams of the house cry to heaven for vengeance.

9. **Coveteth an evil covetousness**—Better R. V., "getteth an evil gain." The vast spoil taken from the nations by evil and illegitimate means. **To his house**—Not the palace, but the entire land and nation (see on Hos. viii, 1). It was for the purpose of enriching and exalting the nation that the conquests were undertaken. **Set his nest on high**—A figure expressing the purpose of establishing his power forever (Num. xxiv, 21; Obad. 4). As the eagle sets his nest on high to protect himself and his young against attacks, so the Chaldean seeks to fortify his position, that he may escape harm forever. **From the power of evil**—Not the "evil one," but any possible attack or calamity (Psa. xlix, 6; Isa. xxxi, 2).

10. "Man proposes, God disposes." The Chaldean disregarded the divine purpose. He thought only of his own interest and exaltation, but in doing so he prepared the way for his fall. **Consulted** ["devised"] **shame**—He sought to bring honor to his dynasty and nation; instead of realizing his ambition, his lust of conquest and rapacity will result in ruin and shame (Jer. vii, 19). LXX. reads, "I will devise." **By cutting off many people** ["peoples"]—LXX. coördinates this with the preceding clause and reads, "thou hast cut off many peoples." The ordinary English translation gives good sense and is not impossible, but it would be in better accord with Hebrew usage to take the infinitive, literally, "to cut off," as object of "devised," so as to read "Thou hast devised shame to thy house, to cut off many peoples." **And hast sinned against thy soul**—By cutting off the many peoples he expected to receive glory and honor; in reality he endangered his very existence. *Soul* is used, as frequently in the Old Testament, in the sense of *life.* Some prefer to render the words as a circumstantial clause, "while thou art sinning against thy soul." He devised to cut off the nations, while in reality he injured himself. The construction is peculiar and the text may be corrupt, but there can be no doubt as to the general sense.

Verse 11 gives the reason for the sentence announced in verse 10. Jehovah cannot overlook the wrongdoing, for the very stones and beams in the house built with blood cry out against the violence practiced in procuring them. **Shall answer it**—Shall reëcho the cry sent up by the stones.

Woe upon the building of cities with the blood and property of strangers, 12–14.

The third woe is a continuation of the second; the latter refers to the building of the empire in general, the former to the extensive building enterprises throughout the land. "The prophet sees the city in process of extension, bands of captives, Jews and Gentiles, bleeding and dying under the blows of their drivers, and he realizes the fraudful dealings by which the treasures expended in the erection of enormous fortifications have been amassed."

town with [n] [12]blood, and establisheth a city by iniquity! 13 Behold, *is it* not of the LORD of hosts [o]that the people shall labor in the very fire, and the people shall weary themselves [13]for very vanity? 14 For the earth shall be filled [14]with the [p]knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

15 Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink, that puttest thy [q]bottle to *him*, and makest *him*

[n] Jer. 22. 13; Ezek. 24. 9; Mic. 3. 10; Nah. 3. 1.——[12] Heb. *bloods.*——[o] Jer. 51. 58.

[13] Or, *in vain?*——[14] Or, *by knowing the glory of the LORD.*——[p] Isa. 11. 9.——[q] Hos. 7. 5.

12. **Town . . . city**—Synonymous; they cannot be restricted to the capital, but include cities scattered throughout the empire, wherever building enterprises were carried on. **Blood, . . . iniquity**—Blood was shed and iniquity done in subduing the nations, in tearing them from their homes and transporting them to Babylonia, and in compelling them to assist in the extensive building enterprises of which the inscriptions of Nebuchadnezzar give a fair idea. The sentiment expressed here is of universal application, but the prophet has in mind primarily the Chaldeans (compare Mic. iii, 10; Jer. xxii, 13). 13. Jehovah has decreed the destruction. **Behold, is it not of Jehovah**—Is it not purposed by Jehovah? For *Jehovah of hosts* see on Hos. xii, 5. **The people . . . the people**—Better, R. V., "the peoples . . . the nations"; that is, the nations subdued by the Chaldeans. **Labor in the very fire**—R. V., "for the fire"; literally, *for the need of the fire.* Jehovah has purposed to give all the works of their hands a prey to the flames. **For very vanity**—In vain. The judgment of Jehovah will bring all they have done to naught. Judgment upon Babylon is announced in similar terms in Jer. li, 58, but it is not certain that there is a direct literary dependence of the one passage upon the other. Nowack, followed by Marti, thinks that the words are a free reproduction of Jer. li, 58, and he renders the first sentence, "Behold, is not of Jehovah of hosts the word"; which he understands as an introduction to the quotation. If this passage is dependent upon Jer. li, 58, Nowack is right in considering it a later addition, but there is insufficient evidence for Nowack's contention.

Verse 14 gives an additional reason for the overthrow of the Chaldeans. Jehovah has purposed to establish his universal kingdom upon earth; to make room for this kingdom of peace and righteousness the cruel and warlike Chaldean must be retired from the scene of action. **The knowledge of the glory of Jehovah**—The glory of Jehovah is the divine manifestation in nature, in history, in revelation; here in the events connected with the overthrow of the Chaldeans. These are intended to give the whole world a more adequate idea of the nature and character of Jehovah. **As the waters cover the sea**—A picture of overflowing abundance (compare Isa. xi, 9). The overthrow of the mighty world conqueror will be so remarkable that the news of it will spread far and wide (compare Psa. cxxvi, 2).

Woe upon cruelty toward other nations, 15–17.

Verse 15 presents a figurative description of the craftiness, cruelty, and cunning by the use of which the Chaldeans have reduced the nations to helplessness. The picture is that of a man giving poisonous or intoxicating drink to another, for the express purpose of taking delight in his shame (Gen. ix, 21), or taking advantage of him. But the oppressor will be compelled to drink of the same cup and suffer shame, only in an intensified form (16, 17).

The thought of verse 15 is clear, but there is some uncertainty as to details. **That giveth his neighbor drink, that puttest thy bottle to him**—The meaning of some of the words is uncertain; hence the difference between A. V. and R. V., "that giveth his neighbor drink, to thee that add-

drunken also, that thou mayest [r]look on their nakedness! **16** Thou art filled [15]with shame for glory: [s]drink thou also, and let thy fore-

[r] Gen. 9. 22.——[15] Or, *more with shame than with glory.*——[s] Jer. 25. 26, 27; 51. 57.

est thy venom." The grammatical construction differs from that in the preceding woes (verses 6, 9, 12). The meaning of the verb translated "add" or "puttest" is uncertain; the translation "bottle" requires a change of vowel points; on the other hand, the expression "to add venom" is peculiar. This accumulation of peculiarities has led most scholars to suspect a corruption of the text, and various emendations have been attempted. That of Wellhausen is the simplest; it requires but slight alterations, removes the difficulties, and gives a very satisfactory sense: "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink out of the cup of his wrath, and maketh him drunken also" (compare Zech. xii, 2). The cup of wrath is one offered in wrath, which, therefore, does not contain a pleasant, refreshing drink, but one bitter and destructive. The cruel, heartless man offers this cup and compels his enemy to drink it to the dregs, until he becomes helpless in his intoxication. An apt illustration of the manner in which the Chaldeans treated other nations. **That thou mayest look on their nakedness**—An indication of the shameful purpose inspiring the act. The one who gives the drink is the Chaldean, those who drink it are the nations; the prostrate condition of the drunken man represents the pitiful condition of the conquered nations, the uncovering of the nakedness suggests the depth of ignominy the conquered nations were made to suffer (Nah. iii, 5).

Verse 16 announces the divine judgment upon the Chaldean; he hoped to exalt himself by bringing shame upon others, and temporarily his hopes appear to be realized, but in the end the ignominy will return upon his own head. **Thou art filled with shame for glory**—R. V., "with shame, and not glory." A somewhat

skin be uncovered: the cup of the LORD'S right hand shall be turned unto thee, and shameful spewing *shall be* on thy glory. **17** For the

freer rendering expresses the thought more clearly, "Thou art filled with shame instead of glory." The Chaldean's object in conquest was to win glory; instead he has brought upon himself shame, for he must suffer the same treatment which he has accorded to others. **Drink thou**—The cup of the divine wrath. **Let thy foreskin be uncovered**—R. V., "be as one uncircumcised." Here equivalent to "show thy nakedness." He compelled others to do this (verse 15). LXX. and other ancient versions read "stagger" instead of "let thy foreskin be uncovered"; the whole clause, "drink thou also and stagger," which may be original (Nah. ii, 4; Zech. xii, 2). **The cup of Jehovah's right hand**—Thus far he has compelled the nations to drink the cup he handed them, now he must take from Jehovah's right hand the cup containing a similar drink. **Shameful spewing**—R. V., "foul shame." The translation of A. V. is due to the erroneous dividing of one word into two; it is one word, an intensive form of the ordinary word for shame. **Shall be on thy glory**—Shall cover it so that it is seen no more; it will entirely displace it.

R. V. expresses more clearly the thought of 17a: "For the violence done to Lebanon shall cover thee, and the destruction of the beasts, which made them afraid." **The violence of** ["done to"] **Lebanon**—This might be understood as a figurative representation of the devastation of Palestine; it is more likely, however, that it is meant literally. The violence is that done to Lebanon by cutting down its stately cedars for use in building enterprises. The inscriptions of both Assyrian and Chaldean kings state that the cedar wood was brought from great distances—sometimes Mount Lebanon is mentioned by name—to be used in the erection of temples and

violence of Lebanon shall cover thee, and the spoil of beasts, *which* made them afraid, [t]because of men's blood, and for the violence of the land, of the city, and of all that dwell therein.

18 [u]What profiteth the graven image that the maker thereof hath graven it; the molten image, and a [x]teacher of lies, that [16]the maker of his work trusteth therein, to make [y]dumb idols? 19 Woe unto him that saith to the wood, Awake; to the dumb stone, Arise, it shall teach!

[t] Verse 8.—[u] Isa. 44. 9, 10; 46. 2.—[x] Jer. 10. 8, 14; Zech. 10. 2.

[16] Heb. *the fashioner of his fashion.*—[y] Psa. 115. 5; 1 Cor. 12. 2.

palaces. The more extensive the building enterprises, the greater the violence to Lebanon. The use of the cedars of Lebanon in the building of heathen temples may have been considered by the Israelites an act of profanity (Isa. xiv, 8). **Shall cover thee**—Shall return upon thine own head (Obad. 10; Jer. iii, 25). **The spoil of beasts** ["the destruction of the beasts"]—That is, of Lebanon. The inscriptions and monuments reveal what enthusiastic hunters were the kings of the East. The invasion of Lebanon for such purposes may also have been considered desecration. **Which made them afraid**—The destruction which made afraid the beasts of Lebanon shall return upon the Chaldean's own head. Though this thought, which can be had from the present Hebrew text, is not unsuitable, many commentators prefer the reading of some of the ancient versions, "and the destruction of the beasts shall make thee afraid." The refrain is repeated from verse 11.

Woe upon idolatry, 18–20.

The last strophe is unlike the preceding in that the "woe" does not stand at the beginning, but at the opening of verse 19. In order to restore similarity many commentators place 19a, "Woe unto him that saith to the wood, Awake; to the dumb stone, Arise!" before verse 18. This arrangement, 19a, 18, 19b, 20, would bring this strophe into accord with the four preceding, and would give a more satisfactory logical arrangement; but that it was the original order cannot be proved; if it was, the present order cannot be accounted for very easily, unless, with Nowack, we assume that verse 18 is a later marginal note, which was inserted in the text in the wrong place. For this assumption there is insufficient evidence, and the omission of verse 18 would make the strophe too brief.

18. **What profiteth**—A rhetorical question, equivalent to "It profiteth nothing"; the idols can render no help in the hour of calamity (Amos ii, 4; 1 Sam. xii, 21; Isa. xliv, 10). **Graven image**—See on Mic. v, 13. **Molten image**—See on Nah. i, 14. **The maker thereof hath graven it**—An expression of contempt; they are only the work of man; how can they be of any use? **Teacher of lies**—Not the priest or prophet of the idol (Isa. ix, 15; compare Mic. iii, 11), but the idol itself (Amos ii, 4; Zech. x, 2), so called in contrast with Jehovah whose word is faithful and true. **To make dumb idols**—Literally, *dumb nothings* (Isa. xlvi, 5–7; compare 1 Cor. xii, 2). It is foolish to trust in idols; it is foolish even to make them, for the maker cannot put life into them. 19. **Woe**—To him who puts his trust into these lifeless nothings. **Awake**—From slumber and inactivity (1 Kings xviii, 27). **Arise**—To help and deliver. Appeals addressed to Jehovah would receive an answer (Psa. xxxv, 23; xliv, 23), but the idols can neither hear nor reply. **It shall teach**—Better, R. V., "Shall this teach?" A question or exclamation of astonishment at the delusion. *Teach* is here equivalent to *respond to the appeal* to show a way of escape from the calamity. The prophet immediately makes it plain why help need not be expected. They have no life in themselves, how can they preserve the life

Behold, it *is* laid over with gold and silver, [a]and *there is* no breath at all in the midst of it. **20** But [a]the LORD *is* in his holy temple: [17] [b]let all the earth keep silence before him.

[a] Psa. 135. 17.——[a] Psa. 11. 4.——[17] Heb. *be silent all the earth before him.*——[b] Zeph. 1. 7; Zech. 2. 13.

of others? **Laid over**—The word occurs only here, hence its meaning is not quite certain; the reference seems to be to the overlaying of idols made of wood or other cheap material with gold or silver. **No breath**—The spirit of life is entirely absent (Jer. x, 4ff.; Isa. xliv, 9ff.).

20. From the idols the prophet turns to Jehovah, to emphasize the contrast between the two (compare Isa. xlvi). **His holy temple**—The interpretation of this expression suggested by Nowack, "in the midst of his people," is not inappropriate, and yet it is more natural to understand it of the heavenly dwelling place of Jehovah (Isa. vi, 1; lxvi, 1), from which he watches the affairs of men and goes forth to manifest himself in judgment (Mic. i, 2, 3). **Let all the earth keep silence before him**—In the presence of the almighty and infinite God it is proper to wait in awe and reverence, to see what he may do (Zeph. i, 7; Zech. ii, 13).

CHAPTER III.

The Prayer of Habakkuk, 1–19.

The prophetic utterances in chapters i, ii are followed by a lyric poem, called in the title, iii, 1, a prayer. Verse 2 contains the petition; it is followed by a description of divine interferences in the past for the salvation of his people (3–15). The knowledge of these past favors gives the prophet an unflinching confidence in Jehovah during the present and impending calamity; in spite of the severest danger, he will trust in the God of his salvation (16–19). In many places the text seems to have suffered in transmission, so that the

CHAPTER III.

A PRAYER of Habakkuk the prophet [a] [1]upon Shigionoth. **2** O LORD, I have heard [2]thy speech, *and* was afraid: O LORD, [3] [b]revive

[a] Psa. 7, title.——[1] Or, *according to variable songs,* or, *tunes, called in Hebrew, Shigionoth.*——[2] Heb. *thy report,* or, *thy hearing.*——[3] Or, *preserve alive.*——[b] Psa. 85. 6.

details of translation and interpretation are not always beyond doubt.

1. **Habakkuk**—On the authorship of the poem see Introduction, pp. 472ff. **Upon Shigionoth**—R. V., "set to Shigionoth." The singular of the noun occurs in Psa. vii, 1, "Shiggaion of David." The exact meaning of this and other technical musical terms in the psalm titles is not known. It seems to be related to a verb "to reel," which is used of the giddiness of intoxication and of love. The primary meaning of the noun would seem to be "reeling"; as a musical term it probably denotes a particular style of poetry or music, or both; a song sung with great excitement, or with a rapid change of emotion. Such a poem is Psa. vii. The prayer of Habakkuk is said to be set to Shigionoth, that is, it is arranged and is to be sung after the manner of these "reeling songs." Schmieder paraphrases it, "after the manner of a stormy, martial, and triumphant ode."

Verse 2 contains the prayer proper. **Thy speech**—R. V., "the report of thee." Some understand "the report of thee" in the sense of "thy report," that is, thy declaration, namely, the announcement, in chapters i, ii, of judgment upon Judah and upon the Chaldeans. But the expression seems to be used always in the sense of report *concerning some one* (Gen. xxix, 13; 1 Kings x, 1). It is the report concerning Jehovah's mighty manifestations, described in 3–15; of these the prophet has heard. Margin R. V., rightly, "thy fame." **I . . . was afraid**—The greatness and sublimity of these interferences filled

thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy.

[4] Or, *the south.*

3 God came from [4]Teman, [c]and the Holy One from mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heav-

[c] Deut. 33. 2; Judg. 5. 4; Psa. 68. 7.

the prophet with fear, not fear of destruction, but a feeling of awe and reverence, which accompanies the recognition of the omnipotence of Jehovah. Fear of destruction would have silenced him or would have wrung from him a cry of despair; the feeling of awe inspired confidence. If Jehovah could help in the past, surely he can help in the present crisis. **Revive thy work**—The work of deliverance described in verses 3–15. The present and the immediate future seem to reveal Jehovah as indifferent toward the best interests of his people. O that he would repeat the wonderful acts of the past, when again and again he became the saviour of his people! **In the midst of the years**—This expression has been variously interpreted; but if taken in connection with the divine manifestations of the past (13–15), and with the promise that at the "appointed time" (ii, 3) he would manifest himself again in mercy, the right interpretation suggests itself. The words refer to the period between the two manifestations, to the prophet's own days and the days of distress yet to come. The petitioner prays Jehovah to come near to his people even now, to hasten the "appointed time." **Make known**—Thy work, which is now hidden. This is essentially a repetition of the thought of the preceding clause. LXX. reads, "make thyself known." **In wrath remember mercy**—The announcement of judgment in i, 5ff., seemed to be an indication of the divine anger. Unchecked it will accomplish the destruction of Judah. Troubled by these prospects, the prophet beseeches Jehovah to temper his wrath with mercy, even in executing judgment, and before the final deliverance promised for the "appointed time." The thought becomes somewhat modified if we read, as is permitted by the Hebrew, "turmoil" for "wrath."

The mighty works of Jehovah in the past, 3–15.

This section describes the mighty acts of Jehovah for a revival of which the prophet prays. It falls naturally into three parts: (1) a description of Jehovah's terrible approach (3–7); (2) a question—Why did he manifest himself? (8–11); (3) the answer—For the salvation of his people (12–15).

Jehovah's terrible approach, 3–7.

3. **Teman**—See on Amos i, 12. **Mount Paran**—In all probability the mountain range between Mount Seir and Mount Sinai. This whole region in the south was thought to be in a special manner the dwelling place of Jehovah, from which his manifestations proceeded (Judg. v, 4; Deut. xxxiii, 2). This belief undoubtedly arose from the fact that there Moses received his revelations, and there the covenant was established between Jehovah and Israel. **Holy One**—A descriptive title of Jehovah (see on Hos. xi, 9). **Selah**—Occurs three times in this chapter (compare 9, 13), and seventy-one times in the Psalter, in thirty-nine psalms. There is still some uncertainty as to the meaning of the word. Some have thought that it marks strophe divisions; a more probable interpretation, however, is that which sees in it a direction to the musicians, either to increase the force of the music, or to play a musical interlude while the singing ceases. **Glory**—See on ii, 14. **Praise**—The parallelism with "glory" indicates that the poet has in mind not so much the expression of praise by the people as *that in Jehovah which evokes the praise,* hence the expression is practically equivalent to "praiseworthy

ens, and the earth was full of his praise. 4 And *his* brightness was as the light; he had [5]horns *coming* out of his hand: and there *was* the hiding of his power. 5 [d]Before him went the pestilence, and [6] [e]burning coals went forth at his feet. 6 He stood, and measured the earth: he

[5] Or, *bright beams out of his side.*—[d] Nah. 1. 3.

[6] Or, *burning diseases*, Deut. 32. 24.—[e] Psa. 18. 8.

manifestation." **Heavens . . . earth**—The whole universe. The thought of the entire verse is that, when Jehovah came forth, the whole universe was dazzled by the splendor and power of his manifestations.

In verse 4 the singer proceeds to describe in greater detail the glory of the divine appearance. **And his brightness was as the light**—Literally, *And there appeared a brightness as the light.* The splendor and brightness of Jehovah's appearance are likened to the dazzling rays of the sun. **He had horns**—In Arabic poetry the first rays of the rising sun are frequently likened to the horns of a gazelle; R. V., "rays." **Out of his hand**—Since the preceding is literally "two horns," some have seen here a reference to Jehovah wielding and directing the thunderbolts with his hand. This would be in accord with the language in other poems, which describe the appearance of Jehovah in the imagery of a thunderstorm. But, since "horn" is not used ordinarily of lightning, it may be better to look for a different interpretation. The hands being on the sides of a person, "from his hand" may be equivalent to "from his side," or even "from both sides." As the disk of the sun is surrounded by bright rays, so Jehovah is thought of here as surrounded by radiant splendor. "Such a radiant splendor surrounding God is presupposed when it is affirmed of Moses that on coming from the presence of Jehovah his face was radiant, or emitted rays" (Exod. xxxiv, 29, 30). **There**—Within the brightness. **The hiding of his power**—All that can be seen is the radiance and the splendor; Jehovah himself is invisible. Ordinarily darkness is represented as covering the Godhead (Exod. xx, 21; 1 Kings viii, 12; Psa. xviii, 12, 13). Following in part LXX. and other ancient versions, Nowack alters 4b and reads verse 4 "His brightness was as the light; the rays at his side he made the hiding place of his power."

Verse 5 points to the servants who accompanied the heavenly King, to carry out his bidding (2 Sam. xv, 1; compare 1 Sam. xxv, 42). **Pestilence**—There was also a dark side to the divine manifestation; he came to execute judgment, and pestilence was his agent (see on Amos iv, 10; compare Isa. xxxvii, 36). **Burning coals**—The Revisers thought this to refer to the thunderbolts which he hurled against his enemies (Psa. xviii, 14), for they translated "fiery bolts." This is a possible interpretation; but in parallelism with "pestilence" it is better understood as the burning fever heat of the plague. This he employed against the enemies of his people. As verse 7 refers to the events on Mount Sinai, so this verse probably refers to the plagues that fell upon the Egyptians before they permitted the Hebrews to depart; there may be an allusion also to the destruction of the army of Sennacherib (Isa. xxxvii, 36).

Having described the bright and the dark sides of Jehovah's manifestation, the poet proceeds to picture in verses 6, 7 the impression made by the coming of Jehovah upon nature and upon man. Both verses refer probably to the events on Mount Sinai. **He stood**—Having reached the goal, he stopped. **Measured**—With the eyes, preliminary to action. The parallelism favors a verb corresponding to "drove asunder" in the next line. LXX. reads "was shaken"; Targum, "he shook"; the last reading is preferable. This may perhaps be

beheld, and drove asunder the nations; [f]and the [g]everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow: his ways *are* everlasting. 7 I saw the tents of [7]Cushan [8]in affliction: *and* the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble. 8 Was the LORD displeased against the rivers? *was* thine anger against the rivers? *was* thy wrath against

[f] Nah. 1 5.—[g] Gen. 49. 26.—[7] Or, *Ethiopia*.—[8] Or, *under affliction*, or, *vanity*.

gotten from the present Hebrew verb, though it is not its usual meaning. Some commentators substitute a different verb. **He beheld and drove asunder**—The look of his eyes was sufficient to terrify and scatter all. The second verb means to start up in terror (Job xxxvii, 1). **Everlasting mountains . . . perpetual hills**—These are the firmest and most substantial portions of the globe; they have existed from the beginning (see on Mic. vi, 2; compare Psa. xc, 2); one would naturally expect them to stand up under the blow, but before Jehovah they crumble. On *everlasting* see note on i, 12. **Were scattered**—Literally, *burst*. The meaning is not that the mountains were scattered in different directions, but that the mountains burst open or were cleaved asunder (Zech. xiv, 4). **Did bow**—In terror. **His ways are everlasting**—R. V., "His goings were as of old." The construction of this clause is uncertain. If it is taken as an independent clause either of these translations may be correct; then the words would have to be regarded as a parenthetical exclamation. R. V. expresses the thought that the divine manifestations for the salvation of Israel resembled those of more ancient times, namely, in creation, in the flood, etc. A. V., following the Hebrew text more closely, declares that Jehovah's manifestations continue forever. In either case the exclamation interrupts the description. Hence several commentators take the words in apposition to "mountains" and "hills," which is permitted by the Hebrew, "his pathways from of old." The mountains and hills which have been pathways of Jehovah from of old (Amos iv, 13; Mic. i, 3) were cleaved and bowed before him. With the entire description should be compared Judg. v, 4, 5; Psa. xviii, 7ff. **Cushan . . . Midian**—The former is a lengthened form of *Cush*, meaning perhaps "tribe of Cush." This cannot be the Cush, or Ethiopia, in Africa (see on Zeph. ii, 12); the parallel "Midian" suggests a territory in Arabia, perhaps the home of one of the wives of Moses (Num. xii, 1). A district *Cush* in Arabia is mentioned in the Assyrian inscriptions. Probably both the Cushites and the Midianites were without settled abode; roaming up and down the desert, they stopped for a time wherever they could find pasture for their flocks. In the period of the Exodus the Midianites were near Mount Sinai; and this makes it probable that the poet alludes here to the events which took place there. **Tents . . . curtains**—The second refers to the tent curtains. The expressions include the persons living in the tents. They were terrified when they beheld the wonderful manifestations of Jehovah.

Why did Jehovah manifest himself in terror? 8–11.

In verse 8 the poet inquires of Jehovah why all this was done; in 9–11 he continues the description; but throughout the whole section runs the question, *Why?*

Was Jehovah displeased against the rivers?—A literal translation of the first two lines is as follows, "Was displeasure against rivers, O Jehovah? was thy anger against the rivers?" Had they done anything to arouse the divine indignation? This is only a rhetorical question, for the singer knows well enough that a loftier motive impelled Jehovah (verse 13). **The sea**—Undoubtedly the Red Sea; the reference is again to events connected

the sea, [h]that thou didst ride upon thine horses *and* [9]thy chariots of salvation? **9** Thy bow was made quite naked, *according* to the oaths of the tribes, *even thy* word. Selah.

[10] [i]Thou didst cleave the earth with rivers. **10** [k]The mountains saw thee, *and* they trembled: the overflowing of the water passed by: the deep uttered his voice, *and* [l]lifted

[h] Verse 15; Deut. 33. 26, 27; Psa. 68. 4; 104. 3.—[9] Or, *thy chariots* were *salvation?*—[10] Or, *Thou didst cleave the rivers of the earth.*—[i] Psa 78. 15, 16; 105. 41.—[k] Exod. 19. 16, 18; Judg. 5. 4, 5; Psa. 68. 8; 77. 18; 114. 4.—[l] Exod. 14. 22; Josh. 3. 16.

with the Exodus. **Ride upon . . . horses . . . chariots**—Jehovah is pictured as a man of war advancing to battle; his horses and chariots are the storm clouds (Psa. xviii, 10; Isa. xix, 1). **Of salvation**—The chariots are so called because wherever Jehovah appears deliverance is sure to be wrought. The idea is still very general; not until verse 13 is there a specific reference to the deliverance of Israel. A suitable rendering would be "victorious chariots." Some take the last words as a separate statement, "thy chariots are salvation," but this involves an improbable interpretation. The text of verse 8 is not above suspicion, but even as it stands the thought is clear; the poet inquires why Jehovah has smitten the rivers and the sea with such terrible fury. Various emendations have been attempted. Marti thinks the original to have been, "Was against the rivers thine anger, or against the sea, O Jehovah, thy wrath? thou didst cause to walk over the sea thy horses, thy chariots over heaps of water."

Verse 9 pictures Jehovah standing upon his chariot ready for battle. **Thy bow was made quite naked**—R. V., "bare." The covering is removed and the bow is ready for use. The bow is not, as is thought by some, the rainbow, but the bow of the warrior God with which he shoots the thunderbolts. **According to the oaths of the tribes, even thy word**—R. V., "The oaths to the tribes were a sure word." The present Hebrew text *plus* a considerable amount of imagination may give this translation, the thought being that the promises made to the tribes of Israel by Jehovah were sure of fulfillment. The peculiarity of the Hebrew and the fact that the thought which can be gotten from it does not fit in the context have led most commentators to suspect a corruption of the text. The marginal translation, "Sworn were the chastisements of thy word," does not remove the difficulty. Of the many translations offered, in Delitzsch's day about one hundred, not one can be considered quite satisfactory. An easy way out of the difficulty is to say with Von Orelli that "the words are intentionally enigmatical in solemn menace." It is more likely, however, that the obscurity has arisen from a corruption of the text. Partly on the basis of LXX. and partly by conjecture Nowack emends, "Thou hast filled with arrows thy quiver," which is more suitable than the present text. **Thou didst cleave the earth with rivers**—Or, *into rivers.* Jehovah cleaved the earth and rivers flowed from it. If the poet thinks of manifestations of divine power in general, this is the most natural rendering; if he has in mind the Exodus, a better translation, equally possible so far as the Hebrew is concerned, would be, "Thou didst cleave the rivers into dry land." Jehovah smote the rivers, so that they became dry land, and the people passed over them dry-shod (Isa. xi, 15).

Verse 10 presents another picture of the convulsions in nature. **The mountains saw thee, and they trembled**—Even the majestic mountains were terror-struck (compare verse 6); literally, *were in agony.* The verb denotes the agony of a woman in childbirth. LXX. reads "nations saw," but the Hebrew is preferable. **The overflowing of the water passed by**—Here again the Hebrew is peculiar. The clause is commonly interpreted

up his hands on high. **11** [m]The sun *and* moon stood still in their habitation: [11]at the light of thine [n]arrows they went, *and* at the shining of thy glittering spear. **12** Thou didst march through the land in indignation, [o]thou didst thresh the heathen in anger. **13** Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, *even* for salvation with thine anoint-

[m] Josh. 10. 12, 13.—[11] Or, *thine arrows walked in the light*, etc.

[n] Josh. 10. 11; Psa. 18. 14; 77. 17, 18.—[o] Jer. 51. 33; Amos 1. 3; Mic. 4. 13.

as meaning that when the mountains were rent in pain water burst forth. A very slight emendation, favored by the similar passage in Psa. lxxvii, 17, would give "the clouds poured out water," which gives good sense and supplies a suitable contrast to the next clause. **The deep uttered his voice**—The deep denotes ordinarily the great subterranean waters (see on Amos vii, 4; compare Gen. vii, 11), but here the poet may be thinking of the Red Sea (compare Isa. lxiii, 13). The voice is the roar of the troubled waters. **And lifted up his hands**—A figurative description of the heaping up of the waves by the storm. The throwing up of the hands is an involuntary act of terror; perhaps there is also implied the thought of raising the hands in a frantic appeal for mercy. Partly on the basis of LXX. some commentators change "hands" into "roar."

11. To increase the terror black darkness covered the whole earth. **Stood still in their habitation**—The habitation is the place whence the sun and moon were thought to come forth, and whither they were thought to return at the close of the journey. "The sun and the moon," says Delitzsch, "withdraw altogether, from the fear and horror which pervade all nature and which are expressed in the mountains by trembling, in the waters by roaring, and in the sun and moon by obscuration." This interpretation is preferable to that of Ewald, that they "turn pale in consequence of the surpassing brilliancy of the lightnings" (compare Isa. xxiv, 23). **Arrows . . . spear**—The thunderbolts and flashes of lightning which Jehovah sent against his enemies (Psa. xviii, 14; lxxvii, 17, 18). From verse 8 on the manifestation of Jehovah is described, as frequently in the Old Testament, in the imagery of a thunderstorm.

The salvation of his people was the object of Jehovah, 12–15.

Verses 12–15 supply the answer to the question in verse 8. Jehovah showed himself terrible not because he was displeased with the rivers, or the sea, or the mountains, but because his anger was kindled against the nations that oppressed his own people. Against the former he marched for the salvation of the latter.

12. **Through the land**—Better, *through the earth;* for Jehovah fought against more than one nation. **Thresh**—Literally, *tread down* (see on Amos i, 3; compare 2 Kings xiii, 7; Job xxxix 15). He spared no one. **In indignation, . . . in anger**—Because they had wronged his people.

Verse 13 declares, at last, why Jehovah went forth. **Thou wentest forth**—To war on behalf of his people (Judg. v, 4; Isa. xlii, 13). **For the salvation**—To bring deliverance from all enemies. **Of thy people, . . . with thine anointed**—This is a literal reproduction of the original; but the expression "with thine anointed" creates difficulty. Who is this anointed one? It cannot be the expected Messiah, because the verse points to events in the past. R. V. renders "of thine anointed," which produces a good parallelism and suggests that "thy people" and "thine anointed" are identical. In other passages also the term is applied to the nation, for anyone who has a special commission from Jehovah may be called "the anointed one." In accordance with this principle the term is applied to Cyrus (Isa. xlv, 1), to the high priest

ed; [p]thou woundedst the head out of the house of the wicked, [12]by discovering the foundation unto the neck. Selah. 14 Thou didst strike through with his staves the head of his villages: they [13]came out as a whirlwind to scatter me: their rejoicing *was* as to devour the poor

[p] Josh. 10. 24; 11. 8, 12; Psa. 68. 21.

[12] Heb. *making naked.*—[13] Heb. *were tempestuous.*

(Lev. iv, 3, 5, 16), to the king (1 Sam. xxiv, 6), to the patriarchs (Psa. cv, 15), to the godly in the nation (Psa. cxxxii, 10), and to the people Israel (Psa. lxxxiv, 9; lxxxix, 38, 51). It must refer to the people, even if the translation of A. V. is retained; he went forth with his people for their salvation. **Thou woundedst the head out of the house of the wicked**—This might possibly mean that Jehovah smote the head of the chief of the evildoers, but with this translation the last clause becomes unintelligible; margin R. V. gives better sense, "Thou didst smite off the head from the house of the wicked man." To this may be joined the rest of the verse as translated in R. V., "laying bare the foundation even unto the neck." The last clause indicates that, though the whole is figurative, within the figure "house" is to be understood literally; the "head" is the upper part, the roof, the "neck" is its central portion, the "foundation" the lowest part; the "wicked man" is the enemy of the "anointed one." The whole is a picture of the utter destruction of this enemy of the people of Jehovah. Who this enemy is taken to be depends upon the interpretation of the poem as a whole. If the poet is describing the divine interference at the time of the Exodus the enemy is Pharaoh or the Egyptian nation; if the poem contains a summary of all the divine manifestations of the past he represents all the hostile nations ever encountered by Israel; if it points to the future, which is not likely, he is the Chaldean. The tone of the entire context suggests that the first view is to be preferred (compare verse 15). **Laying bare** (R. V.)—Used here in the general sense of "destroy" (Mic. i, 6; Psa. cxxxvii, 7). It must be admitted that the whole figure is a strange one; LXX. either read a different text or could not make anything out of the Hebrew; several recent commentators consider the text hopelessly corrupt.

14. The enemy was overwhelmed completely when his warriors were cut to pieces. **With his staves**—Or, *spears;* R. V., "with his own staves"; that is, the staves of the enemy. His own weapons, now directed by Jehovah, will be used by the destroyers (compare Ezek. xxxviii, 21; Zech. xiv, 13). It is not impossible, however, that for "his" we should read "thy," that is, the staves or spears of Jehovah (compare verse 11). **The head of his villages**—R. V., "the head of his warriors." The doubtful word is found only here; LXX. renders "princes." The use of other words derived from the same root would favor the meaning "inhabitants of the plain," in distinction from those living in walled towns; hence the translation of A. V., "villages." From the meaning *people scattered over the plain* the more general "crowd" or "multitude" (compare margin, "hordes") is derived, and since the poet deals with war, a "horde of warriors"; and this seems to be the meaning most suitable in this place, Jehovah pierced the heads of the hostile warriors. **They came out as a whirlwind**—These words are better connected with the preceding as a relative clause, "who came out as a whirlwind," that is, with the swiftness and violence of a storm. **To scatter me**—In the vividness of the description the poet transposes himself into the midst of the events and includes himself among the people threatened by the enemy. **Their rejoicing was as to devour the poor secretly**—Again better taken as a relative clause, "whose rejoicing. . . ." The thought of the line seems to be

secretly. **15** [q]Thou didst walk through the sea with thine horses, *through* the [14]heap of great waters. **16** When I heard, [r]my belly trembled; my lips quivered at the voice:

[q] Verse 8; Psa. 77. 19.——[14] Or, *mud.*

that, while the enemies were advancing, they rejoiced at the thought of the helplessness of Israel, and they looked forward with exultation to the moment when they would have the poor, helpless people at their mercy, to devour them at their leisure (compare Exod. xiv, 3; xv, 9). The figure is taken from the practice of a wild beast to seize the prey and carry it to its den, there to devour it (Psa. x, 9; Isa. v, 29). While this seems to be the general thought, it is difficult to get it from the present Hebrew text. Marti alters the text of verse 14 so as to read, "thou didst pierce with thy weapons his head; his princes scattered like chaff; to scatter me came their army, to devour the poor in secret."

Verse 15 closes the description of the mighty works of Jehovah in the past. **Thine horses**—See on verse 8. **Sea . . . the heap of great waters**—Here, as throughout the entire poem, the reference seems to be to the events connected with the Exodus from Egypt; in this verse to the crossing of the Red Sea. Jehovah, the mighty conqueror, delivered his people in that greatest crisis in their history (Exod. xiv, 15; compare Isa. xi, 15, 16); well may the singer trust that he will not fail them in the present calamity.

The poet's confidence in Jehovah, the God of his salvation, 16–19.

In the closing verses of chapter iii the psalmist describes the feelings produced within himself by the remembrance of the divine manifestations in the past; at first, fear and trembling (16a), then joy and confidence in the God of his salvation (16b–19).

16. **When I heard**—R. V. simply, rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the day of trouble: when he cometh up unto the people, he will [15]invade them with his troops.

[r] Psa. 119. 120; Jer. 23. 9.——[15] Or, *cut them in pieces.*

"I heard." The report of thee (verse 2); that is, the report of the wonderful manifestations of Jehovah in the hour of Israel's distress (compare 3–15). **My belly trembled**—R. V., "my body." An expansion of "was afraid" (verse 2). Jehovah's approach was terrible to behold, so that all nature trembled. No wonder that even the report of it should cause the prophet and the people to quake, though they have nothing to fear. **My lips quivered**—The verb is used elsewhere of the ringing of the ears (1 Sam. iii, 11; 2 Kings xxi, 12); in this place the poet may mean more than simply the quivering of the lips, he may have in mind also the chattering of the teeth; so that "lips" would stand for the lips *plus* the teeth covered by the lips. **At the voice**—Since nothing is said of a voice speaking to the singer, the noun may be used in the more general sense of "report," or of "noise" (Gen. iii, 8; 1 Kings i, 41), made by Jehovah advancing to battle. The events are so vivid in the mind of the singer that he seems to hear Jehovah coming. **Rottenness entered into my bones**—Terror robbed him of all strength; his powers became paralyzed. **I trembled in myself**—R. V., "in my place"; literally, *under me,* that is, where I stood (Exod. xvi, 29; 2 Sam. ii, 23). His knees shook under him.

To this point the verse is quite clear; it describes the fear which seized the poet when he remembered the mighty works of Jehovah. The rest is exceedingly obscure. The translators were perplexed, as may be seen from the differences between the two translations: A. V., "that I might rest in the day of trouble: when he cometh up unto the people, he will invade them with his troops"; R. V., "Because I must wait quietly for the day

17 Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither *shall* fruit *be* in the vines; the labor of the olive shall [16]fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and *there shall be* no herd

[16] Heb. *lie.*

of trouble, for the coming up of the people that invadeth us." The translation of A. V. gives little sense, for how can the trembling produce rest in the day of trouble? R. V. is more satisfactory. It states that the trembling is due to the fact that the singer must sit down quietly and wait for the calamity that will befall his people, unable to do anything to turn it aside. But even this thought is not quite suitable; besides it is not very easy to get it from the present Hebrew text. For the last line, which is even more obscure, a third translation is offered in margin R. V., "when there shall come up against the people he that invadeth them." Again A. V. gives the least sense; R. V. places the last line in apposition to the preceding, and the result is more satisfactory; the marginal reading expresses essentially the same idea. The whole verse becomes clearer, if in one point we follow LXX. instead of the present Hebrew text; the former does not seem to have read the relative, which the English translators reproduce as a conjunction, A. V. "that," R. V. "because." With this omitted the second part of verse 16 marks a new beginning and is to be understood not as an expression of fear but of confidence, like verses 17–19. At first the memory of the manifestations of Jehovah in the past terrified the psalmist: "I heard, and my body trembled, my lips quivered at the voice; rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in my place." But soon fear was displaced by confidence. If Jehovah could help then, surely he can help now; therefore he breaks out into a song of joyand confidence, of which 16b is the beginning: "I will wait quietly for the day of trouble, for the coming up of the people that invadeth us." This interpretation of 16b is preferable to all others.

Verses 17–19 contain one of the most sublime expressions of confidence in Jehovah found anywhere in the Old Testament. If the above suggested interpretation of 16b is correct, verse 17 becomes the natural continuation. The prophet looks forward to the day of trouble announced in i, 6ff., but the help of Jehovah in the past brings to him the assurance that in the present also he will stand by his people; therefore, however severe the temporary affliction, he will still rejoice in Jehovah and wait for the God of his salvation. **Fig tree . . . vines . . . olive**—The chief products of Palestine (see on Joel i, 7, 10). **Fields**—The cornfields. **Meat**—Better, R. V., "food." **Flock . . . herd**—A portion of the inhabitants of Judah remained shepherds throughout the entire history of the Hebrews. All the natural resources of Judah are here enumerated, and the poet assumes a complete failure of all these resources; but, he continues, though all may fail, he will rely upon Jehovah, who is his strength and will supply all his needs.

Some have thought that the historical background of verse 17 is not that of chapters i, ii, and for this reason they have denied the entire third chapter to Habakkuk (see Introduction, p. 473). Others, for the same reason, have raised doubts concerning the genuineness of verse 17 or of verses 17–19. "This verse (17) does not suggest a condition of scarcity and barrenness arising from a hostile invasion of the land, but rather *one due to severe natural calamities.*" This consideration leads A. B. Davidson to say, "It is possible that the poem originally ended with verse 16, and that verses 17–19 are an addition." In reply it may be pointed out (1) that the term "God of my salvation" is used frequently, if not exclusively, in

in the stalls. 18 [s]Yet I will [t]rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my [s]alvation. 19 The LORD God *is* [u]my strength, and he will make my feet like [x]hinds' *feet*, and he will make me to [y]walk upon mine high places. To the chief singer on my [17]stringed instruments.

[s] Job 13. 15.——[t] Isa. 41. 16; 61. 10.——[u] Psa. 27. 1.——[x] 2 Sam. 22. 34; Psa. 18. 33.

[y] Deut. 32. 13; 33. 29.——[17] Heb. *Neginoth*, Psa. 4, title.

connection with deliverance from enemies; (2) that expressions similar to those in verse 19 are used in Psa. xviii, 33, of Jehovah's help against hostile armies. In any case, the objections can be urged only against verse 17; but even there it is by no means certain that the reference is to drought and resulting barrenness and to other natural calamities. A hostile army overrunning the land, destroying the crops, tramping down the fields, and killing the cattle and sheep could easily cause the very kind of suffering pictured in verse 17 (compare Isa. i, 7–9, or almost any historical inscription of the Assyrian kings). Another objection, based upon the sudden transition from gloom to confidence, is without any force. Similar transitions occur in all poetry, they are very numerous in the psalms, and in the present case it is quite natural.

18, 19. Whatever the severity of the affliction, the prophet and those whose mouthpiece he is will rejoice in Jehovah (Psa. v, 11), for he can supply all needs, and in due time he will prepare a way of escape. **God of my salvation**—A God who delivers from suffering and distress and restores to the former prosperity and felicity (Mic. vii, 7; Psa. xviii, 46). Verse 19 shows resemblance with Psa. xviii, 32, 33. **My strength**—The source of strength in times of calamity (Psa. xviii, 32; compare 2 Cor. xii, 9). **Like hinds' feet**—The point of comparison is not named; it is undoubtedly swiftness, one of the most important qualifications of an ancient hero (2 Sam. i, 23; 1 Chron. xii, 8). **And he will make me to walk upon mine high places**—A continuation of the preceding figure; the high places are those on which the hinds skip. The thought is of the ease with which the singer, with Jehovah's help, can walk firmly in difficult places and overcome obstacles which without Jehovah's aid would be insurmountable. Ultimately the people of Jehovah will triumph. The thought remains the same if, following the most important ancient versions, we omit the pronoun "mine."

Here ends the poem proper. What follows, "To the chief singer on my stringed instruments," is the subscription, which, with the exception of the pronoun, is identical with the headings of several psalms in the Psalter (see Introduction, p. 473). **Chief singer**—R. V., "chief musician." This word occurs in the headings of fifty-five psalms; it is a participial form of a verb used in Chronicles and Ezra in the sense of "superintending"; in 1 Chron. xv, 21, in the specific sense of "leading the music." There can be little doubt that the word used here and in the psalm titles means "precentor" or "conductor" of the temple choir. Delitzsch thinks that "To the chief musician" is the direction to this leader to receive a hymn with that superscription into the temple collection. **On my stringed instruments**—The verb from which this noun is derived means "to pluck the strings," "to play upon stringed instruments"; the phrase means, therefore, "with the accompaniment of stringed instruments," and it is a direction that stringed instruments, and no others, are to be used to accompany the singing. The force of the pronoun "my" is doubtful. Does it refer to the poet in the sense that he will accompany the singing with his own stringed instruments? If so, the plural would not be expected. A comparison with Isa. xxxviii, 20, has led some to interpret "my" in a collective sense, referring to the people, equivalent to "our." If the pronoun is original, the

second interpretation is to be preferred. LXX. reads "his," that is, of the chief musician. However, in view of the fact that the pronoun is found nowhere in the psalm titles, it is probable that here also it should be omitted, that we should read simply, "on stringed instruments."

Why this musical note stands at the end rather than at the beginning, as in the psalms, is still an open question. Some think that when this psalm was taken from the psalm collection (see Introduction, p. 473) the words, which were intended to be the heading of the next psalm, were copied erroneously and carried over with this psalm. As there were in the beginning no well-marked divisions between the separate psalms, such mistake might easily have been made. On the other hand, it is claimed (see Thirtle, *The Titles of the Psalms*) that originally only the notices indicating the author and the historical situation were placed at the head, while the musical notes were always placed at the end; that in the present case the original order has been preserved, while in the Psalter the musical notes have been taken from the end of the psalms for which they were intended and have been placed erroneously at the head of the succeeding psalms, which has resulted in much confusion. Thirtle has made out a strong case; he has succeeded in removing some grave difficulties, and much may be said in favor of his view; but it would be perhaps too much to claim that he has placed the subject entirely beyond question.

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF ZEPHANIAH.

The Prophet.

CHAPTER i, 1, supplies the only direct information concerning the person and life of the prophet Zephaniah. In addition, a few facts concerning his life may be gathered from his utterances.

The name Zephaniah means *Jehovah hides,* or *Jehovah has hidden.* Concerning it G. A. Smith says, "It suggests the prophet's birth in the 'killing time' of Manasseh," when so many faithful servants of Jehovah had to lay down their lives for the faith (2 Kings xxi, 16). His ancestry is traced back four generations (i, 1): "Zephaniah the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hezekiah." It is not customary in the Old Testament to carry back a man's ancestry so far (compare Isa. i, 1; Jer. i, 1; Hos. i, 1); and from the exception to this general rule in the case of Zephaniah it has been inferred that the last mentioned, Hezekiah, must have been a prominent man—indeed, no other than King Hezekiah of Judah, the contemporary of Isaiah and Micah (compare Isa. xxxvi—xxxix; Jer. xxvi, 18). Two objections have been urged against this identification: 1. It is said that if Hezekiah were the king bearing that name the title "king of Judah" would not have been omitted. But the omission can readily be explained on the ground that "king of Judah" follows immediately afterward in connection with Josiah's name; a repetition would have made the sentence awkward. 2. The second objection is based upon the fact that in the ruling line only two generations are named between Hezekiah and Josiah, namely, Manasseh and Amon, while between Hezekiah and Zephaniah are three names, Amariah, Gedaliah,

Cushi. However, Manasseh had a very long reign, and he was forty-five years of age when Amon was born (compare 2 Kings xxi, 1, 19); consequently there is room enough for an additional generation in another line of the same family. If Zephaniah was of royal blood his condemnation of the royal princes (i, 8), with whose conduct he was evidently familiar (i, 8ff.), becomes of great interest. In a similar manner did Isaiah, who in all probability was of royal blood, condemn without hesitation the shortcomings and vices of the rulers and the court.

An ancient tradition declares that he was of the tribe of Simeon, which would make it impossible for him to be of royal blood; but the origin and value of the tradition are uncertain. He undoubtedly lived in the southern kingdom; that he lived in Jerusalem is made probable by the statement in i, 4, "I will cut off from *this* place," as well as by his intimate knowledge of the topography of the city (i, 10, 11). For how long he continued his prophetic activity we do not know, but it is not improbable that, as in the case of Amos, his public activity was short, and that, after delivering his message of judgment in connection with a great political crisis, he retired to private life, though his interest in religious reforms may have continued (2 Kings xxiii, 2).

The Time of Zephaniah's Prophetic Activity.

1. *Date.*—The title (i, 1) places the prophetic activity of Zephaniah somewhere in the reign of Josiah, that is, between 639 and 608. Most scholars believe that the title was added at a later time by the collector of the Minor Prophets, but, almost without exception, they accept the statement as historically correct. The most important exception is Koenig, who dates the prophecy in the decade following the death of Josiah; but his arguments in favor of that date find their sole strength in improbable interpretations; for example, he thinks that ii, 15, presupposes the fall of Nineveh as an accomplished fact; that the condemnation of the Ethiopians

(ii, 12)—whom he seems to identify with the Egyptians—was called forth by the carrying away of Jehoahaz (2 Kings xxiii, 34); that iii, 8, points to the advance of Nebuchadnezzar against Jerusalem in 597.

Neither these nor his other arguments are conclusive against the correctness of the tradition embodied i, 1; on the contrary, all the internal evidence points toward the reign of Josiah as the period of Zephaniah's activity. The reign of Jehoiakim seems to be made impossible by Zephaniah's silence concerning the king in his condemnation of the corrupt court practices (i, 8, 9). The omission is hardly accidental; but if it is intentional it points to a time when the throne was occupied by a virtuous and religious monarch such as was Josiah.

But if the prophet's activity continued for a short time only, the question arises whether it can be located more definitely within the period of thirty-one years covered by Josiah's rule. This king's reign naturally falls into two parts, separated by the great reform of 621. Does the work of Zephaniah belong to the earlier or later period? On this point scholars disagree, the majority favoring the earlier date.

The more important arguments in favor of the late date are: (1) Deut. xxviii, 29, 30, is quoted in Zeph. i, 13, 15, 17, in a manner which shows that the former book was well known; but the Law was not known until 621, because it was lost. (2) The "*remnant* of Baal" points to a period when much of the Baal worship had been removed, but that means subsequent to the reform of 621. (3) The condemnation of the "king's sons" (i, 8) presupposes that at the time of the utterance they had reached the age of moral responsibility; this again points to the later period.

These arguments are inconclusive. (1) It is always difficult to prove which one of two similar passages is dependent on the other (see p. 136); in this case the resemblances between Deuteronomy and Zephaniah are of such a general character that dependence of either passage on the other

seems improbable. (2) The expression in i, 4, was equally appropriate before 621. As suggested on i, 4, "the remnant" may be equivalent to *every vestige,* that is, everything there is of it; and the threat may be equivalent to "I will cut off Baal till not a trace of it is left" (compare Hos. ii, 17); which leaves it undecided whether or not a partial destruction had already taken place. But even if "remnant" is understood in the sense of "that which survived" it does not take us necessarily to a period subsequent to 621. While the religious reform reached its climax in that year, a beginning was undoubtedly made before that time, and there seems no reason for doubting the essential correctness of 2 Chron. xxxiv, 3, 4, which states that in the twelfth year of his reign (about 627) Josiah "broke down the altars of the Baalim"; hence at any time subsequent to 627 one might speak of a "remnant of Baal." A third possible interpretation is to regard "Baal" as a type of all false worship; then again the expression might be used before 621. (3) The third objection is touched upon in the comments on i, 8, where it is shown that the expression *king's sons* may be equivalent to *royal princes,* referring not to Josiah's children at all. The last two objections lose all their force if the LXX. readings are substituted—in the first place, "the *names* of Baal" (compare Hos. ii, 16, 17); in the second, "the *house* of the king."

On the other hand, there are several considerations pointing to the earlier date: (1) The youth of the king would make it easy for the royal princes to go to the excesses condemned in i, 8, 9. (2) The idolatrous practices condemned by Zephaniah (i, 3-5) are precisely those which were abolished in 621, and, while traces of them may have remained here and there, the wholesale condemnation of Zephaniah is inexplicable during Josiah's reign after that date; only the reign of Jehoiakim would warrant them again (but see above). (3) The temper described in i, 12, is explicable before 621 and after the death of Josiah in 608, but not between 621 and 608, when religious enthusiasm was widespread. (4) While

the latter part of Josiah's reign lacks a suitable occasion for the prophecy, it finds a natural background during the earlier part. The tone of the entire prophecy makes it evident that a serious crisis was at hand at the time of its delivery, that an enemy was threatening the borders of Judah and of the surrounding nations. During the latter part of the seventh century B. C. Judah was threatened by three different nations: by the Scythians (about 625), by the Egyptians (about 608), and by the Chaldeans, when Jehoiakim was on the throne, near the close of the century. If the prophecy belongs to the reign of Josiah the Chaldeans, who did not become a prominent factor in Asiatic history until after the death of Josiah, need not be considered. Schwally thinks that the Egyptians fill the horizon of the prophet; but (1) the description is so vague and yet the terror so great that it seems more likely that the approaching foe was not as familiar to the prophet as the Egyptians must have been. (2) Though powerful, the Egyptians were not strong enough during the closing years of the seventh century to inspire the expectation that they would penetrate to distant Nineveh. Josiah thought that even he with his small army could check the advance of Pharaoh-necho. (3) It is not improbable that the Ethiopians in ii, 12, represent, or at least include, the Egyptians. If so, the latter cannot be the dreaded enemy. For these reasons A. B. Davidson is probably right when he says, "An historical nation like Egypt, which had always lain within Israel's horizon, was not fitted to be the executor of Jehovah's judgment upon the known world."

If this is true, the foe must be the Scythians, but this again points to the early part of Josiah's reign, for the Scythians swept over western Asia about 625 B. C. The mystery of the origin of these wild hordes "clothed them with just that vague terribleness which characterizes Zephaniah's description." At the time the prophecy was delivered their advance against Egypt seems to have been still in the future, but imminent (compare i, 14); hence the prophet's activity may be placed

between 630 and 625, perhaps in 626. If this date is correct Zephaniah and Jeremiah began their ministries in the same year; it is, indeed, thought by many that the earlier utterances of the latter (for example, iv, 5—vi, 30) had their origin in the Scythian crisis.

2. *Political Condition.*—The political situation in Judah during the reign of Manasseh is touched upon in connection with Micah (see p. 359). This king was succeeded by his son Amon, who reigned two years. Since the author of Kings is silent concerning the political events during his reign, we may suppose that the political situation remained undisturbed. For some reason dissatisfaction broke out among his servants, and he was assassinated, perhaps, indirectly, at least, through the influence of the prophetic party. Josiah, a boy eight years old, came to the throne. Fifty verses in 2 Kings xxii, xxiii, are devoted to his reign, but little is said concerning political events. He seems to have remained loyal to his Assyrian lord to the very end, even when the latter's prestige had begun to vanish; and this loyalty cost him his life. When it became evident that Assyria was doomed, her old-time rival, Egypt, was anxious to claim a part of her territory before anyone else could do so. The energetic Necho "went up against the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates." Prompted by a sense of duty, and trusting that Jehovah, for whose worship he had done so much, would fight with him, "king Josiah went against him," hoping to check his advance. In the old battlefield of Palestine, the Plain of Esdraelon, near the old town of Megiddo, they met, and, in the simple words of the author of Kings, "Pharaoh-necho slew him at Megiddo, when he had seen him." During the reign of this king Zephaniah prophesied.

The most important political events outside of Judah proper, but seriously affecting the fortunes of the latter, were the overthrow of the Assyrian empire, beginning with the declaration of independence by Nabopolassar of Babylon in 625 and ending with the fall of Nineveh in 607-606 (see on

Nahum, p. 432), and the appearance of the Scythians in western Asia.

Many questions concerning these Scythians remain still unanswered (see *Encyclopædia Biblica,* article "Scythians"), but this much is clear, that they were a non-Semitic race of barbarians which swept in great hordes over western Asia during the seventh century B. C. According to Herodotus they were masters of western Asia from the Caucasus to the borders of Egypt for twenty-eight years (about 635-607), when they threatened to invade Egypt; but the Pharaoh, Psammetichus, prevailed upon them by rich gifts to desist from the undertaking. Though the Greek historian may exaggerate in details, the inscriptions leave no doubt as to the essential accuracy of his statements. However, Breasted (*A History of Egypt,* p. 580) thinks that it was not the gold of Egypt but the strong arm of Psammetichus which drove them from his borders. A vivid description of the ravages of these barbarians is given by Rawlinson: "Pouring through the passes of the Caucasus —whence coming or what intending none knew—horde after horde of the Scythians blackened the rich plains of the south. On they came like a flight of locusts, countless, irresistible, . . . finding the land before them a garden, and leaving it behind them a howling wilderness. Neither age nor sex would be spared. The inhabitants . . . would be ruthlessly massacred by the invaders, or, at best, forced to become their slaves. The crops would be consumed, the herds swept off or destroyed, the villages and homesteads burned, the whole country made a scene of desolation. Their ravages would resemble those of the Huns when they poured into Italy, or of the Bulgarians when they overran the fairest provinces of the Byzantine empire."

Well might Zephaniah tremble when he heard of the approach of these merciless, bloodthirsty barbarians.

3. *Moral and Religious Condition.*—Though his utterances are few and brief, Zephaniah does not leave us in doubt concerning religious and moral conditions in Judah in his day. For

additional information we may turn to the early discourses of Jeremiah, and to 2 Kings xxi—xxiii, where we find a picture of conditions during the reigns of Manasseh, Amon, and Josiah. Social injustice and moral corruption were widespread: "Woe to her that is rebellious and polluted! to the oppressing city!" (iii, 1.) "Her princes in the midst of her are roaring lions; her judges are evening wolves; they leave nothing till the morrow" (iii, 3). "They rose early and corrupted all their doings" (iii, 7). Luxury and extravagance might be seen on every side; fortunes were heaped up by the unjust oppression of the poor: "The princes and the king's sons, and *all such as are clothed with foreign apparel.* . . . Those that leap over the threshold, that fill their master's house with violence and deceit" (i, 8, 9).

The religious situation was equally bad. The reaction under Manasseh came near making an end of Jehovah worship (2 Kings xxi); Amon followed in the steps of his father, so that the outlook was exceedingly dark when Josiah came to the throne. Fortunately the latter seems to have been under prophetic influence from the very beginning, and, assisted by the faithful nucleus within the nation, he undertook a sweeping religious reform, which reached its culmination in the eighteenth year of his reign. When Zephaniah preached, this reform was still in the future (see above), and his utterances give some idea of the corrupt state of religion. The Baalim were worshiped and the high places were flourishing (i, 4); the hosts of heaven were adored upon the housetops (i, 5); a half-hearted Jehovah worship, which in reality was idolatry, was very widespread (i, 5); great multitudes had turned entirely from following Jehovah (i, 6).

When the cruel Manasseh was allowed to sit undisturbed upon his throne for more than fifty years, many grew skeptical and questioned, whether Jehovah took any interest in the affairs of the nation; they began to say in their hearts, "Jehovah will not do good, neither will he do evil" (i, 12). Conditions could hardly be expected to be otherwise when the reli-

gious leaders had become misleaders: "Her prophets are light and treacherous persons; her priests have profaned the sanctuary; they have done violence to the law" (iii, 4). The few who, amid the general corruption, remained faithful would be insufficient to avert the awful judgment upon the nation, though they themselves might be "hid in the day of Jehovah's anger" (ii, 3).

The Book of Zephaniah.

1. *Contents.*—The Book of Zephaniah falls naturally into two parts of unequal length: the first part (i, 2—iii, 7) contains, almost exclusively, denunciations and threats; the second (iii, 8-20), a promise of salvation and glorification.

Following the title (i, 1) the prophecy opens with a message of judgment upon all, and upon Judah in particular. Jehovah is about to sweep away, in a great world judgment, both man and beast (i, 2, 3); the heaviest blow will fall upon Judah and Jerusalem (4), because they have not sought Jehovah nor walked in his way. Instead of worshiping him they have practiced various kinds of idolatry (4-6); instead of loving justice and mercy they have oppressed the poor and robbed the needy (8, 9). The judgment is imminent (7). When it comes, cries of agony and despair will be heard everywhere (10, 11). No one will escape, for Jehovah will "search the city with lamps," to find the guilty and deliver them up to the destroyer (12a). Even the skeptical and indifferent will be aroused by the terrible character of the judgment (12b, 13). In the closing verses of chapter i Zephaniah returns to the imminence and terribleness of the day of Jehovah. It "is near and hasteth greatly" (14); it is a day of darkness without a ray of light (15), a day of battle (16). The calamity will throw the inhabitants into helpless confusion, so that they will stagger like blind men and fall an easy prey to the enemy (17), who will show them no mercy (18a). All this will come to pass, because Jehovah has determined to "make an end, yea, a terrible end, of all them that dwell in the land" (18b).

The message of judgment is followed by an exhortation to repentance (ii, 1-3). Aroused by the indifference of the listeners, the prophet pleads with them to give some expression of repentance (1), else they will be swept away like chaff before the wind (2). One way of escape is offered to the *meek,* namely, to "seek Jehovah." If they do this they may be "hid in the day of Jehovah" (3).

The next section (ii, 4-15) contains threats of judgment upon five nations. Philistia will be destroyed so completely that no inhabitant is left (4-7); for their pride and arrogance Moab and Ammon will become like Sodom and Gomorrah (8-10). The terrible manifestations of Jehovah's power will reveal the nothingness of the deities worshiped by other nations, and all men will render homage to the God of Israel (11). Ethiopia in the south will feel the divine wrath (12); but the severest blow will fall upon Assyria and its capital, Nineveh (13-15).

In iii, 1, the prophet turns once more to Jerusalem, the rebellious and polluted, the city of oppression. He strikes here the same notes as in chapter i, condemning moral and religious apostasy. Her princes are thieves, her prophets deceivers, her priests blasphemers (1-4). Jehovah has spared no efforts to win back the apostate city, but in spite of his efforts her inhabitants continued to corrupt all their doings (5-7).

Since all warnings have failed, the judgment, which will involve Judah with the other nations, is inevitable (8). But within the doomed nation is a faithful remnant that will escape destruction. This remnant is exhorted to remain loyal amid the confusion and convulsions to come, because the future has brighter things in store for it. The judgment will result in the conversion of a choice portion of the nations of the earth (9, 10); this company with the redeemed and purified remnant of Judah will find refuge and peace in Jehovah (11-13).

The closing section (14-20) pictures the joy of the redeemed

daughter of Zion. She is exhorted to rejoice and be glad, because Jehovah has redeemed her and now rules in the midst of her (14-17). The book closes with a promise that Jehovah will deliver her from all her foes, remove her reproach, gather her dispersed children, and make her "a name and a praise among all the nations of the earth" (18-20).

2. *Outline.*—

TITLE—THE AUTHOR OF THE PROPHECY.....Chap. i, 1

A. THREATS OF A UNIVERSAL JUDGMENT.....i, 2—iii, 7

I. *The day of Jehovah a day of terror to all—Only one way of escape*.....i, 2—ii, 3

1. The world judgment.....i, 2, 3

2. The judgment upon Judah and Jerusalem.....i, 4-18

(1) The causes of the judgment....i, 4-9

(a) The religious apostasy..i, 4-6

(b) The social and moral corruption.....i, 7-9

(2) The wail of the inhabitants..i, 10-13

(3) The imminence and terror of the judgment.....i, 14-18

3. Exhortation to repentance.....ii, 1-3

II. *Judgment upon the nations*.....ii, 4-15

1. Philistia.....ii, 4-7

2. Moab and Ammon.....ii, 8-11

3. Ethiopia (= Egypt?).....ii, 12

4. Assyria.....ii, 13-15

III. *Woe upon the polluted city of Jerusalem*.....iii, 1-7

1. The city's religious and moral apostasy..iii, 1-4

2. Jehovah's futile attempts to win her affection..iii, 5-7

B. THE TRANSFORMING EFFECTS OF THE JUDGMENT AND THE SUBSEQUENT GLORY.....iii, 8-20

I. *The world judgment and its effect*.....iii, 8-13

1. The inevitableness of the judgment.....iii, 8

2. Its effect upon the nations.....iii, 9, 10

3. Its effect upon Judah.....iii, 11-13

II. *The joy of the redeemed daughter of Zion*....iii, 14-20

1. Exhortation to rejoice and be glad.....iii, 14-17

2. Jehovah's glorious promise.....iii, 18-20

3. *Teaching.*—Leaving aside for the present the question of integrity, we may consider here the teaching of the entire Book of Zephaniah. Its theology resembles closely that of the earlier prophetic books. Jehovah is the God of the universe, a God of righteousness and holiness, who expects of his worshipers a life in accord with his will. Israel is his chosen people, but on account of its rebellion against him it must suffer severe punishment. Wholesale conversion seems out of the question, but a remnant may be "hid in the day of Jehovah's anger," and this remnant will be exalted among the nations. In his emphasis of these and similar truths Zephaniah follows in the footsteps of his predecessors, and especially, as Smend has pointed out, in those of Isaiah; he adds little, but attempts with much spiritual and moral fervor to impress upon his contemporaries the fundamental truths of the religion of Jehovah.

There are, however, a few points in the teaching of the Book of Zephaniah which deserve special mention: 1. The emphasis upon *the day of Jehovah* (see on Joel i, 15, and p. 148). Earlier prophets had spoken of it; Amos (v, 18-20) had described it in language similar to that employed by Zephaniah (i, 15), but the latter surpasses all his predecessors in the emphasis he puts upon this terrible manifestation of Jehovah. His entire teaching centers around this day, and in the Book of Zephaniah we find the germs of the apocalyptic visions which became so common in later prophecies of an eschatological character. Concerning this day he says that (1) it is a day of terror (i, 15); (2) it is imminent (i, 14); (3) it comes as a judgment for sin (i, 17); (4) it falls upon all creation, man and beast, Hebrew and foreigner (i, 2, 3; ii, 4-15; iii, 8); (5) it is accompanied by great convulsions in nature (i, 15); (6) from its terrors a remnant consisting of redeemed Hebrews and foreigners will escape (ii, 3; iii, 9-13). 2. Though the prophecy closes with a sublime picture of the glories of the Messianic age, not one word is said concerning the person of the Messianic king. Whatever is accomplished is accomplished by Jehovah himself. 3. The vision of the book

is world-wide. The terrors of the day of Jehovah will fall upon all, and in the same manner, from all the nations of the earth converts will be won to Jehovah, who will bring offerings to him (iii, 9, 10). 4. "Men shall worship him, every one in his place" (ii, 11). This is a step in advance of the expectation expressed in Mic. iv, 1; Isa. ii, 2, "all nations shall flow unto it," that is, Jerusalem. This prophet moves in the direction of the utterance of Jesus, "The hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father" (John iv, 21).

The Integrity of the Book.

The originality of every verse in chapters ii and iii and of several verses in chapter i has been questioned by one or more scholars. The most recent writer, Marti, assigns to Zephaniah the following verses, in the order here given: i, 7, 2, 3 (in part), 4, 5, 8 (in part), 11 (in part), 12, 13 (in part), 14-16, 17 (in part), ii, 1, 2 (in part), 4, 5-7, 12-14. To these verses, he thinks iii, 1-7, were added during the post-exilic period; other additions were made in the second century B.C. when the book passed through the hands of a redactor; ii, 11, and iii, 9, 10, he considers the latest additions. Stade, who seems to have been the first to express doubts concerning the integrity of the book, questions ii, 1-3, 11; iii, 1-20. Schwally is doubtful concerning ii, 1-3, and denies to Zephaniah ii, 5-12; iii, 1-20. Budde rejects ii, 4-15; iii, 9, 10, 14-20. Wellhausen is suspicious of ii, 3, and rejects ii, 7 (in part), 8-11; iii, 1-20. In addition to a few sentences in chapter i Nowack questions ii, 7 (in part), 8-11, 15; iii, 9, 10, 14-20. G. A. Smith rejects ii, 8-11; iii, 9, 10, 14-20. A. B. Davidson says concerning chapter ii, "It is possible that verses 4-15 have in various places been expanded," but he believes that in substance they come from Zephaniah. He expresses doubts concerning iii, 9, 14-20. Driver (*Encyclopædia Biblica*) is inclined to reject ii, 11; iii, 9, 10, and he has doubts concerning iii, 14-20, more especially 18-20.

An examination of these and other views shows that the passages questioned or rejected with greatest persistency are ii, 1-3, 4-15 (especially 8-11); iii, 9, 10, 14-20, and these demand more detailed consideration.

1. The principal objection to ii, 1-3, is the presence in ii, 3, of the expressions "meek of the land" and "seek meekness." It is claimed that "meek" and "meekness" as religious terms are postexilic. There can be no question that the words occur more frequently in postexilic psalms and proverbs than in preexilic writings, but it cannot be proved or even shown to be probable that the words might not have been used in Zephaniah's day. The word "meek" occurs in Num. xii, 3 (compare Isa. xi, 4), and meekness, or a humble attitude toward Jehovah, is unquestionably emphasized during the preëxilic period as a divine requirement (Exod. x, 3; Isa. ii, 9ff.; Mic. vi, 8). A second objection is found in the difference of tone between these verses and chapter i. The latter, from beginning to end, speaks of the terrors of judgment; ii, 1-3, weakens this threat by offering a way of escape. This objection, raised also in connection with other passages of similar character (see pp. 35, 215), is unwarranted. Judgment cannot have been the last word with the prophets; with them the purpose of judgment is always disciplinary; they are accustomed to offer hope to a remnant. This being the case, ii, 1-3, seems to form the necessary completion of chapter i. It is not impossible that the text of these verses has suffered (see on ii, 1, 2), but there seems no good reason for denying them to Zephaniah.

2. The section ii, 4-15, contains several distinct oracles, which may be considered separately. For verses 13-15 a date preceding the fall of Nineveh seems most suitable; the threat against Philistia (4-7) also is quite intelligible in the days of Zephaniah, for the Scythians passed right through the Philistian territory. If Ethiopia stands for Egypt verse 12 also can easily be accounted for as coming from Zephaniah, for the enemies, who were going along the Mediterranean coast,

must inevitably reach Egypt. What could hinder them from continuing their ravages there? But even if the country south of Egypt is meant no difficulty exists. Zephaniah was expecting a world judgment, and Ethiopia might properly be named as representing the far south. Was there anything to prevent the Scythians from advancing thither?

There remains the threat against Moab and Ammon in ii, 8-11. The following reasons are advanced against the originality of these verses: 1. The mention of these countries is not expected, because they were far removed from the route taken by the Scythians. 2. The "reproaches" of ii, 8, 10, presuppose the destruction of Jerusalem (compare Ezek. xxv, 3, 6, 8). "It surprises," says Wellhausen, "that the Moabites and Ammonites should have mocked and looked down upon the Jews as early as the days of Josiah." 3. The attitude of the prophet toward Judah (9, 10) is the exact opposite of that expressed in chapter i. 4. The *Ḳînāh* verse, which predominates in the rest of the section, is absent from verses 8-11. 5. Verse 12 is the natural continuation of verse 7. In reply it may be said: 1. It is by no means certain that the "reproaches" presuppose the calamity of 586 B. C.; they may refer to expressions of hostility such as are alluded to again and again in the Old Testament (Num. xxii ff.; Judg. iii, 12ff.; x, 7ff.; 1 Sam. xi, 1-5; 2 Sam. viii, 2; Amos i, 13-15; ii, 1-3; Isa. xvi, 6; xxv, 10; Jer. xlviii, 29; Deut. xxiii, 3-8). If the prophecy came from a period subsequent to the fall of Jerusalem silence concerning Edom would be very strange. "It is highly improbable," says Davidson, "that a threat of judgment on the nations, uttered during the exile, would fail to include Edom." 2. While it is true that Moab and Ammon were not in the direct line of advance of the Scythians toward Egypt, it is worthy of note that Zephaniah speaks of a *world* judgment. To execute it the Scythians were forced to deviate from the advance toward Egypt. But if he expected a world judgment was it not quite natural that he should name, among the nations doomed, these long-time enemies of the Hebrews?

3. The present Hebrew text is not in the *Ḳînāh* verse, and to those who demand in the prophets consistency in the use of specific poetic meters this fact will be conclusive evidence against the authenticity of these verses. But one may ask (1) whether we have a right to demand this consistency in oratory; (2) whether the apparent inconsistency may not be due to a corruption of the text, or to a later expansion of authentic utterances? 4. An interruption of the thought is noticed only by those who assume that the prophet meant to enumerate the nations in the order in which he expected the Scythians to reach their territory. From Philistia they would naturally pass on to Egypt, hence verse 12 should follow verse 7. But is the assumption warranted? 5. The third objection is urged also against verse 7. In chapter i the people of Judah are condemned unconditionally; in ii, 7, 8-10, they are pitied and are promised the territory of their oppressors. It should be noted, however, that the promise is to the "*remnant* of the house of Judah" (verse 7), to a "*residue* of my people" and a "*remnant* of my nation" (verse 9); but if the prophet expected the preservation of a remnant, is there any reason why he might not make to it these promises?

From these remarks it can be seen that the five arguments against the originality of verses 8-11 are by no means conclusive. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that verse 12 would form a natural continuation of verse 9; and since verses 10, 11 do differ in other respects from those preceding (see comments), suspicion of the originality of these two verses cannot be suppressed.

3. Chapter iii, 1-8, resembles in spirit and substance chapter i to such an extent that objections to the originality of these verses cannot be taken seriously, but verses 1-8 carry with them verses 9-13, which describe the purifying effects of the judgment announced in 1-8. The present text of verse 10 may be corrupt, but if it is emended as suggested below, there remains insufficient reason for questioning verses 10, 11.

4. Chapter iii, 14-20, is a section similar in tone to Mic.

vii, 7-20, and the remarks concerning the latter (p. 368) are applicable to these verses. The buoyant tone of the passage forms, indeed, a marked contrast to the somber, quiet strain of verses 11-13; the judgments upon Judah appear to be in the past (verse 15); verses 18-20 seem to presuppose a scattering of the people of Judah, while the purifying judgment of verses 11-13 falls upon the people in their own land; hence there is much justice in Davidson's remark that "the historical situation presupposed is that of Isa. xl ff." On the other hand, it must be borne in mind that the passage is highly poetic, that it presents an ideal picture of the future, in the drawing of which imagination must have played some part; and it may be difficult to assert that the composition of this poem was entirely beyond the power of Zephaniah's enlightened imagination. But, while the bare possibility of Zephaniah's authorship may be admitted, the two facts mentioned above make it not improbable that iii, 14-20, contains a "new song from God," added to the utterances of Zephaniah at a period subsequent to the fall of Jerusalem.

ZEPHANIAH.

CHAPTER I.

THE word of the LORD which came unto Zephaniah the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hizkiah, in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah. 2 [1]I will utterly consume all *things* from off [2]the land, saith the LORD. 3 [a]I will consume man and beast; I will consume the fowls of the heaven, and the fishes of the sea, and [b]the [3]stumbling-blocks with the wicked; and I will cut off man from off the land,

[1] Heb. *By taking away I will make an end.*——[2] Heb. *the face of the land.*——[a] Hos. 4. 3.——[b] Ezek. 7. 19; 14. 3, 4, 7; Matt. 13. 41.——[3] Or, *idols.*

CHAPTER I.

1. *The title.* **The word of Jehovah which came**—See on Hos. i, 1. For the genealogy of the prophet see p. 505; for the date of his ministry, pp. 506ff.

THE DAY OF JEHOVAH A DAY OF TERROR—ONLY ONE WAY OF ESCAPE, i, 2–ii, 3.

The prophecy of Zephaniah opens with the announcement of a world judgment (i, 2, 3); the heaviest blow will fall upon Judah and Jerusalem for their deeds of violence and their religious apostasy (4–9). The prophet pictures the execution of judgment (10, 11), and chapter i closes with a vivid picture of the terrible day of Jehovah, which "is near and hasteth greatly" (14–18). Only an immediate return to Jehovah can save from the worst (ii, 1–3).

The world judgment, 2, 3.

In these verses Jehovah himself is introduced as speaker. **All things**—All living things, man and beast, are to be swept from the face of the earth. **From off the land**—R. V., more accurately, "from off the face of the ground." Meant is not only the land of Judah, but the whole earth. Micah also introduces his message of judgment upon Israel and Judah with a description of Jehovah's coming for the purpose of executing a universal judgment (Mic. i, 2–4).

"All" is expanded in verse 3. **Man and beast**—Man alone is guilty, but beasts, fowls, and fishes will share his doom. "The sphere of man's life, the realm of his rule, is involved with him in a common destruction" (compare Hos. iv, 3; Ezek. xxxviii, 20; Rom. viii, 20–22). The prophet may have in mind the story of the flood (Gen. vi, 7). The rest of verse 3 introduces a thought which seems foreign to the immediate context, hence most recent commentators consider it a later addition for the purpose of limiting the judgment to the wicked. **The stumbling-blocks with the wicked**—The meaning of the first noun is uncertain. It occurs again in Isa. iii, 6, in the sense of *ruin;* a similar word is used in the sense of *idol* in Ezek. xiv, 3, 4, 7, and from the latter passage is derived the translation "stumbling-blocks" = idols (compare σκάνδαλα in the New Testament). LXX. reads, "and the wicked shall be made to stumble"; that is, instead of the noun it reads a verb form. The *passive* construction may be due to an attempt on the part of the translator to remove God as the cause of the destruction, but some form of the verb is to be preferred, perhaps, "I will cause to stumble the wicked." **Cut off man**—LXX., "wicked men"; and since the destruction of man in general is announced in the beginning of the verse

saith the LORD. 4 I will also stretch out mine hand upon Judah, and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and [c]I will cut off the remnant of Baal from this place, *and* the name of [d]the Chemarims with the priests;

[c] Fulfilled, 2 Kings 23. 4, 5.

[d] Hos. 10. 5.

and LXX. gives better parallelism, the latter is undoubtedly to be preferred.

Judgment upon Judah and Jerusalem, 4–9.

The judgment will be particularly severe upon Judah and Jerusalem (4), because they "have not sought Jehovah nor inquired after him"; instead, they have practiced idolatrous rites of various kinds (4–6). In Jerusalem the ungodly nobles will suffer the most, because they are arrogant and have practiced oppression, violence, and deceit (7–9).

4. **Stretch out mine hand**—To smite (Isa. v, 25; ix, 12ff.). Equivalent to "turn my hand against" (see on Amos i, 8). **Judah, . . . Jerusalem**—Zephaniah prophesies concerning the southern kingdom; the northern kingdom was destroyed a century before his day. **Remnant of Baal**—Literally, *remnant of the Baal.* The translators of LXX. have been influenced by Hos. ii, 17, "the names of the Baalim"; at any rate, there seems insufficient reason for doubting the originality of the present Hebrew text. The *Baal* is not the Tyrian Baal, but the Canaanitish Baal, or rather Baals (see on Hos. ii, 5), for the noun is used here collectively. Zephaniah may use the term in an even wider sense, as including all forms of illegitimate worship, all of which were due very largely to Canaanitish influence. The expression *remnant* does not presuppose necessarily the reform of 621 B. C., as if the prophet desired to say that all that was left from that reform would be destroyed in a judgment to come; it means, rather, "every vestige of Baal worship," that is, all there is of it (compare Isa. xiv, 22). The expression does not presuppose even a preliminary attempt at purifying the worship of Jehovah (see p. 508). **From this place**—Jerusalem. If Zephaniah prophesied in the capital this expression is perfectly intelligible even before the concentration of worship in Jerusalem. **The name of the Chemarims with the priests**—LXX. simply, "the names of the priests," which reading implies the omission of either "Chemarims" or "priests," and the omission of one of these words is favored by most recent commentators, including the cautious Davidson. Both nouns mean priests; the second is the common Old Testament term, the other is used only three times. Its etymology is uncertain, but the usage in the other passages (Hos. x, 5; 2 Kings xxiii, 5) shows that it is applied to the priests at the local sanctuaries, officiating at the counterfeit Jehovah worship practiced there. If both words are original, the second refers to priests practicing out-and-out idolatry. Against this interpretation Davidson raises the objection that "in such a case the term *priest* would have been more fully defined." But such definition is not needed, because the context leaves no doubt as to the persons in the prophet's mind. At any rate, the arguments against the originality of the present Hebrew text are by no means conclusive. May not the omission of LXX. be due to the failure of the translators to grasp fully the thought of the prophet and the distinction he desired to make? In verse 5 he distinguishes between two classes of worshipers; why might he not also make a distinction between two classes of priests? Counterfeit Jehovah priests as well as out-and-out idol priests are to be cut off, so that even their names shall be heard no more. If one name is omitted, the remaining one must include both classes.

Verses 5, 6 name different classes of worshipers that will be swept away.

5 And them [e]that worship the host of heaven upon the housetops; [f]and them that worship *and* [g]that swear [4]by the LORD, and that swear [h]by Malcham; 6 And [i]them that are turned back from the LORD; and *those* that [k]have not sought the LORD, nor enquired for him.

[e] 2 Kings 23. 12; Jer. 19. 13.—[f] 1 Kings 18. 21; 2 Kings 17. 33, 41.—[g] Isa. 48. 1; Hos. 4. 15.

[4] Or, *to the LORD*.—[h] Josh. 23. 7; 1 Kings 11. 33.—[i] Isa. 1. 4; Jer. 2. 13, 17; 15. 6.—[k] Hos. 7. 7.

Worship the host of heaven—The sun, moon, and stars. This form of idolatry, which was quite common in Judah during the latter part of the seventh century B. C. (Jer. viii, 2; xix, 13), was introduced from Assyria. The alliance consummated by Ahaz (2 Kings xvi, 7–9) opened the way for its introduction, and further provision was made for it by Manasseh (2 Kings xxi, 3, 5; compare xxiii, 12). Josiah sought to abolish it (2 Kings xxiii, 4, 5, 12), but he did not succeed completely (Ezek. viii, 16; compare Job xxxi, 26). **Upon the housetops**—An indication that the worship was rendered directly to the heavenly bodies when they were visible, and not to representations of them. The construction of the rest of verse 5 offers some difficulties. The text may have suffered, but the ancient versions offer no relief. If the present text is original a better rendering would be, "those who bow themselves, who devote themselves to Jehovah but swear by their king." The first "swear" of A. V. is certainly an erroneous translation, for the construction is not the same as in the last clause; the expression means rather "to devote oneself by oath to the service of another," and that fits admirably. The people prostrate themselves before Jehovah and vow loyalty to him; then they go and swear by some other deity, an indication that, in reality, their affection does not belong to Jehovah. While in this wise acceptable sense can be gotten from the present text, the latter is undoubtedly awkward and is greatly improved if the first "and that swear by" is omitted. It might easily have crept in from the following clause. With this omission 5b will read, "Those who bow themselves before Jehovah but swear by their king"; that is, nominally they worship Jehovah, in reality they have transferred their affection to other deities. If this is the correct interpretation, verse 5 condemns two classes of worshipers, the out-and-out idolaters and the hypocritical Jehovah worshipers (compare Ezek. xxiii, 39). **Malcham**—Margin R. V., "their king." The god whom they recognize as their chief deity, whoever he might be. When many gods are worshiped the individual worshipers have their favorites among them. Peshitto and some manuscripts of LXX. read "Milcom" or "Moloch," the name of the chief deity of the Ammonites. This presupposes the same consonants but different vowel points in Hebrew; in Jer. xlix, 1, 3, the same vowel points are retained. That Milcom was worshiped in Judah in Zephaniah's days is shown by 2 Kings xxiii, 13.

A third class of sinners is condemned in verse 6, those who have renounced entirely Jehovah and his religion. **Turned back from Jehovah**—R. V., "turned back from following Jehovah." They began as worshipers of Jehovah, but have apostatized. **And those that have not sought**—This translation implies that 6b condemns another class of sinners; it is better, however, to consider the words a characterization of the people condemned in 6a and translate, "And them who have turned from following Jehovah, and who do not seek Jehovah nor inquire for him." The word rendered here "inquire" is translated in Amos v, 4, 6, "seek" (see there); the other word is translated "seek" in Hos. v, 6, and has practically the same meaning. These apostates have no longer any concern for Jehovah (verse 12).

7 [1]Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord GOD: [m]for the day of the LORD *is* at hand: for [n]the LORD hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath [5]bid his guests. 8 And it shall come to pass in the day of the LORD'S sacrifice, that I will [6]punish [o]the princes, and the king's children, and all such as are clothed with strange apparel. 9 In the same day also will I punish all those that leap on the threshold, which fill their

[1] Hab. 2. 20; Zech. 2. 13.——[m] Isa. 13. 6. ——[n] Isa. 34. 6; Jer. 46. 10; Ezek. 39. 17; Rev. 19. 17.——[5] Heb. *sanctified*, or, *prepared*.——[6] Heb. *visit upon*.——[o] Jer. 39. 6.

7. The judgment is imminent, Jehovah has made all preparation for its execution, and the people are summoned to wait, in awful silence, the approach of the judge. **Hold thy peace at the presence**—Only one word in Hebrew—*hush!* (see on Hab. ii, 20; Zech. ii, 13). **Day of Jehovah**—See on Joel i, 15. For the crisis which Zephaniah considered the harbinger (see p. 161) of the day of Jehovah see Introduction, p. 511. **Hath prepared a sacrifice**—The judgment is pictured as a great sacrificial feast (see on Amos v, 23) prepared by Jehovah himself; the sacrificial animals are the sinners condemned in verses 4–6 (compare Isa. xxv, 6; Jer. xlvi, 10). **Hath bid his guests**—R. V., "hath consecrated," or sanctified. Only those who were clean could participate in a sacrificial meal. In this case the guests were the Scythians, who were foreigners, and therefore unclean; but Jehovah has purified them so that they can participate in the feast without fear that the wrath of Jehovah will smite them. There is a slight inconsistency in the figure, for the invaders are not content to eat the sacrifice already prepared; they themselves slay and thus help to prepare the feast.

8, 9. In agreement with the other preëxilic prophets Zephaniah names the nobles and princes as special objects of the divine wrath, because they have sinned most persistently against the divine will. **Princes**—See on Hos. iii, 4. **The king's children**—LXX., "the king's house." The latter is accepted as original by some because the other is thought to create a chronological difficulty. The condemnation presupposes that the children had reached the age of responsibility, but if the prophecy is dated before 621 B. C. the children of King Josiah must have been very young at the time of its delivery (compare 2 Kings xxiii, 31, 36). "Children" and "house" are sometimes interchanged in the Old Testament, but such interchange need not be assumed here, for why restrict the term to the sons of Josiah? It may be intended to include the sons of the deceased kings, Amon and Manasseh, and may be equivalent to "royal princes." What the prophet means to say is that not even the royal family will escape the judgment. It is worthy of notice that there is no condemnation of the king. At the time of Zephaniah's preaching Josiah was too young to commit very serious offenses; besides, it is not improbable that even during the early years of his reign he was under prophetic influence, which would prevent him from committing the crimes of his predecessors. **Such as are clothed with strange apparel**—R. V., "foreign apparel." An evidence of indulgence and of disregard of the simplicity characteristic of the ancient Hebrews. Only the court and the nobles could afford these costly garments (compare Matt. xi, 8), and they secured the means with which to purchase them by oppression and violence (compare Isa. ii, 6, 7; Deut. xxii, 11; Lev. xix, 19). It has been suggested to place 9b after 8a and 8b after 9a, but this rearrangement is no improvement over the present text. Verse 9 condemns other forms of wrongdoing. **Those that leap on the threshold**—Better, R. V., "over the threshold." Since this expression occurs only here, commentators differ widely in their interpretations. Some think that it refers to a superstitious rite of the

masters' houses with violence and deceit. 10 And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD, *that there shall be* the noise of a cry from [p]the fish gate, and an howling from the second, and a great crashing from the hills. 11 [q]Howl, ye inhabitants of Maktesh, for all the merchant people are cut down; all they that bear silver are cut off.

[p] 2 Chron. 33. 14.

[q] James 5. 1.

idol worshipers (compare 1 Sam. v, 5), but the second part of the verse does not favor this view. There is no conjunction between the two parts, which indicates that no new transgression is condemned; the filling of the house with violence and deceit is closely connected with the leaping over the threshold. Hence Ewald is probably right when he says that even 9a refers to "dishonest servants of the royal court who seek to serve their lord well by exacting treasures from his subjects by force and fraud." It may be a sort of proverbial phrase for breaking into other people's houses for purposes of robbery. **Their masters' houses**—R. V., "their master's house." Not the house of Jehovah, but the house of the chief to whom they render unscrupulous service. **With violence and deceit**—With treasures and possessions secured through violence and fraud. Similar condemnations may be read in all the preexilic prophets (compare Amos iii, 10; Mic. iii, 1–3; Ezek. xxii, 25–29). Jehovah must punish these outrages.

The terrors of the judgment, 10–13.

Zephaniah is so certain that the impending doom cannot be averted that he depicts in these verses the wailing that will ascend from all parts of the city in the day of judgment. 10. **Noise of a cry**—A loud cry, of anguish and despair. **Fish gate**—Mentioned again in 2 Chron. xxxiii, 14; Neh. iii, 3; xii, 39. It is generally thought that it was in the north wall of the city, not far from the northwest angle of the same. Through this gate the fishmongers from Tyre are supposed to have come (Neh. xiii, 16); if so, the fish market may have been located near it. Since the north was exposed more than the other sides of the city, hostile attacks might be expected to come from that direction. For this reason the prophet names localities in the northern section of the city as the places from which the cries of despair will be heard. **The second**—R. V., "the second quarter"; Heb. *mishneh,* which might be translated "new town." It may be the name of a recent addition to the city proper. Its exact location is not known, but it is generally thought to have been situated on the hill Acra. According to 2 Kings xxii, 14; 2 Chron. xxxiv, 22, the prophetess Huldah lived there. **Crashing**—Or, *noise.* Since the word stands in parallelism with "cry" and "howling" in the preceding clauses, it should be understood not of the crash of falling buildings, but of the noise made by the terror-stricken inhabitants. **The hills**—Upon which the city was built, but the prophet is thinking especially of the hills in the northern section of the city. 11. **Maktesh**—This must be another portion of the city. The context suggests that it was the quarter of the merchants, but its location is uncertain; it is not improbable, however, that it also should be looked for in the northern part of Jerusalem. Targum reads "in the ravines of the Kidron," but that is purely a guess. The noun means "depression" (Judg. xv, 19) or "mortar" (Prov. xxvii, 22); hence it is probable that some valley or depression in the city is referred to. Most writers think of the northern end of the Tyropœon valley. The name may have been selected because of its suggestiveness; the inhabitants are to be crushed as in a mortar. **The merchant people**—Literally, *the people of Canaan;* but the interpretation embodied in the translation of A. V. is correct (see on Hos. xii, 7). **They that bear**

12 And it shall come to pass at that time, *that* I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are [7] [r]settled on their lees: [s]that say in their heart, The LORD will not do good, neither will he do evil. 13 Therefore their goods shall become a booty, and their houses a desolation: they shall also build houses, but [t]not inhabit *them*; and they shall plant vineyards, but [u]not drink the wine thereof. 14 [x]The great day of the LORD *is* near, *it is* near, and hasteth greatly, *even* the

[7] Heb. *curded*, or, *thickened*.—[r] Jer. 48. 11; Amos 6. 1.—[s] Psa. 94. 7.

[t] Deut. 28. 30, 39; Amos 5. 11.—[u] Mic. 6. 15.—[x] Joel 2. 1, 11.

silver—R. V., "they that were laden with silver," that is, possessed silver in large quantities. The reference is to the rich merchants.

12. No one will escape, for Jehovah will penetrate the darkest recesses and bring out the guilty to deliver them to the destroyer. **With candles**—Better, R. V., "with lamps," or lanterns, such as watchmen carry when they look for criminals. **The men that are settled on their lees**—Or, as margin R. V., "thickened on their lees." The figure is taken from wine that has been left undisturbed until it has thickened; it describes the apathy, the spiritual insensibility, of the rich (compare Jer. xlviii, 11, 12). **Say in their hearts**—Think within themselves. **Will not do good, neither . . . evil**—They refuse to believe that Jehovah has anything to do with the affairs of this world (compare Isa. v, 18, 19; Mal. ii, 17). "Those referred to are men who have lived at ease, without trouble or vicissitude in life, and who have therefore sunk down into unfeeling indifference or even into incredulity regarding any interference of a higher power in the affairs of mankind."

13. These indifferent and skeptical persons Jehovah will startle from their spiritual slumber when he manifests himself as judge and ruler of the world. **Therefore**—Their disregard of Jehovah compels him to vindicate his power and supremacy. **Their goods shall become a booty**—The prophet expects the judgment to take the form of a hostile invasion; the enemy will capture the city and carry off as booty the possessions of the inhabitants. **Their houses a desolation**—Nothing but ruins and desolation will be left behind. 13b seems to be a sort of proverbial saying announcing that the godless will not be permitted to enjoy the results of their labors (see on Amos v, 11; compare Mic. vi, 15). The originality of 13b has been questioned, and not without reason. It is certainly strange that the prophet should announce the judgment as imminent (verse 7; compare verse 14), and then, almost in the same breath, should give the inhabitants enough time to build houses and plant vineyards before the judgment falls.

The terrors of the day of Jehovah, 14–18.

In verse 14 Zephaniah calls attention once more to the nearness of the day of Jehovah (compare verse 7); in the succeeding verses he describes in detail its terrors. In it Jehovah will make an end, yea, a terrible end, of all them that dwell in the land. Earlier prophets had spoken of the darkness and despair of that day, but Zephaniah surpasses them all in vividness and awful grandeur.

The great day . . . is near—See on verse 7; Joel i, 15; ii, 11, 31. The imminence of the day of Jehovah and its terrible character are dwelt upon again and again in the prophetic writings. In this verse its nearness is emphasized; therefore, "is near" is repeated and strengthened by "hasteth greatly." Bachmann says of 14b, "This sentence impresses one as being in absolutely hopeless confusion." If one looks for smoothness of expression he will be disappointed; but if one takes into consideration the intensely emotional character of Hebrew prophecy, especially of the utterances announcing the doom of the nation, if one bears in mind that these

voice of the day of the LORD: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. **15** [y]That day *is* a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, **16** A day of [z]the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers. **17** And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall [a]walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the LORD: and [b]their blood shall be poured out

[y] Verse 18; Isa. 22. 5; Jer. 30. 7; Joel 2. 2, 11; Amos 5. 18.

[z] Jer. 4. 19.—[a] Deut. 28. 29; Isa. 59. 10. —[b] Psa. 79. 3.

words were spoken by men whose hearts were well-nigh breaking as they contemplated the approaching destruction, he will not be surprised when he discovers evidences of emotion even in the form of expression, an abrupt nervous style. If 14b is studied from this point of view the difficulties lose their terror. G. A. Smith, with his keen insight into the spirit of Hebrew prophecy, translates, "Hark! the day of Jehovah. A strong man—there! crying bitterly!" The vision of the prophet beholds the agony and despair of the great day, he hears the cry of pain and distress from those who under ordinary circumstances are men of courage and might; as soon as he beholds the awful picture he breaks forth in the agonizing cry of 14b. **Hark**—For this meaning of the word ordinarily translated "voice" see G.-K., 146b. **There**—On the field of battle where the terrible struggle rages. **Cry . . . bitterly**—Because he cannot save himself and must go down before the terrible foe (compare Isa. xiii, 7, 8; Jer. xxx, 5, 7). In order to restore parallelism with 14a Marti changes the text of 14b so as to read, "Near is the bitter day of Jehovah; even the mighty man crieth bitterly."

15, 16. "In order to depict more fully the terrible character of this day Zephaniah crowds together in verses 15, 16 all the words supplied by the language to describe the terror of the judgment." **Day of wrath**—A day on which the wrath of Jehovah will manifest itself against everything that is impure and sinful (see on Nah. i, 2). The effects of this manifestation are described in the rest of the verse (compare Isa. xxii, 5). 1. **Trouble and distress**—*Men* will not know what to do (Job xv, 24). 2. **Wasteness and desolation**—The *land* will be wasted and thus share in the judgment (Job xxxviii, 27). 3. **Darkness . . . gloominess, . . . clouds . . . thick darkness**—If meant to be understood literally, the words express the thought that *nature* also will be affected by the terrible judgment (see on Joel ii, 2, 30, 31); they might, however, be used figuratively (see on Amos v, 18). Verse 16 shows that war will be the means of executing the judgment. **Trumpet**—Better, *horn* (see on Hos. v, 8). **Alarm**—The same word is translated "shouting" in Amos i, 14; ii, 2 (see there). The shouting of the attacking soldiers and the sound of the signal horns will be heard everywhere. **Fenced cities**—Of Judah (compare Isa. ii, 15; Mic. v, 11). **High towers**—R. V., "battlements." The corners and battlements of the walls surrounding the cities (2 Chron. xxvi, 15).

17. The awfulness and suddenness of the calamity will throw the inhabitants into helpless confusion. **Distress**—Anxiety, terror, perplexity. **Walk like blind men**—They will look for a way out of the tribulation, but in their perplexity they grope around like blind men, unable to find one (compare Deut. xxviii, 29). **Because they have sinned**—The judgment is the result of the sins described in verses 4–13. **Their blood shall be poured out as dust**—The point of comparison is worthlessness. Human blood will be considered of no more value than the dust trodden under foot; hence it will be poured out wantonly. The last clause expresses a

as dust, and their flesh [c]as the dung.
18 [d]Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD'S wrath; but the whole land shall be [e]devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for [f]he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land.

[c] Psa. 83. 10; Jer. 9. 22; 16. 4.—[d] Prov. 11. 4; Ezek. 7. 19.—[e] Chap. 3. 8.—[f] Verse 2, 3.

similar thought. **Their flesh as the dung**—The word translated "flesh" occurs again only in Job xx, 23; its meaning is not certain, but the ancient versions favor the English translation. Some have suggested the translation "intestines" or "bowels," which would be very appropriate here, but that translation has little support. Others render it "sap" (blood), in parallelism with "blood" in the preceding clause, while some change the Hebrew word to get this meaning. A very ingenious emendation is that of Bachmann, who reads the last clause, "and they shall lick water like camels." In the absence of conclusive evidence to the contrary, it may be best to retain the meaning given to the word by the English translators, which gives acceptable sense. The bodies of the slain will be cast forth like dung (compare Amos viii, 3).

18. Ordinarily liberty and safety might be purchased from an invader by the payment of a heavy tribute, and thus the Egyptians are said to have purchased their freedom from the Scythians (see p. 511), but in this case gold and silver will not tempt the divinely appointed executioner (Isa. xiii, 17; Ezek. vii, 19; compare Prov. xi, 4). **The whole land**—Judah; not "the whole earth," for in verses 4–18 the prophet confines himself to Judah and Jerusalem (not so in iii, 8). **The fire of his jealousy**—See on Joel ii, 18. In this case, however, the divine resentment is aroused not against those who have dishonored his people, but against his people for dishonoring Jehovah (compare verse 17). While the devastation is wrought by a hostile army, back of it is Jehovah, who has made the enemy "the rod of his anger, the staff of his indignation" (Isa. x, 5). **He shall make even a speedy riddance**—Literally, *for an end, even a terrible destruction he shall make.* The destruction will be complete (compare Nah. i, 8). **Them that dwell in the land**—As before, the land of Judah.

CHAPTER II.

Exhortation to Repentance, 1–3.

As the Book of Zephaniah is arranged now, ii, 1–3, is connected closely with ii, 4–15. The exhortation to repentance (ii, 1–3) is thought to be enforced by the announcement of a terrible judgment upon all nations of the earth, Judah and Jerusalem included (ii, 4–iii, 8). It seems preferable, however, to consider these verses the conclusion of chapter i, since a call to repentance addressed to Judah has a more natural connection with a threat upon Judah (i, 2–18) than with a threat upon the nations (ii, 4–15).

CHAPTER II.

[a] GATHER yourselves together, yea, gather together, O na-

[a] Joel 2. 16.

1. **Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together**—The meaning of the Hebrew underlying this translation is uncertain. The verb seems to be a derivative from a noun *stubble, chaff, straw;* hence its primary meaning is to "gather straw" or "stubble" (Exod. v, 7, 12). This is not suitable here. In Num. xv, 32, 33, and in 1 Kings xvii, 12, it is joined to the noun "wood," which indicates that it may be used in the more general sense, "gather." This is the meaning given to the verb in this passage in the ancient versions as well as by the English translators. Some have suggested "bow yourselves, and be bowed," or "turn pale, and be pale," or "be ashamed, yea, be ashamed,"

tion [1]not desired; 2 Before the decree bring forth, *before* the day pass [b]as the chaff, before [c]the fierce anger of the LORD come upon you, before

[1] Or, *not desirous.*

[b] Job 21. 18; Psa. 1. 4; Isa. 17. 13; Hos. 13. 3.—[c] 2 Kings 23. 26.

but these meanings cannot be established for the Hebrew verb. In view of the uncertainty it is not strange that various emendations have been suggested, but certainty cannot be had. If the common English translation is retained the interpretation also is uncertain. Some interpret the expressions metaphorically in the sense of "recollect yourselves," as if the prophet were exhorting the people to search their hearts, to consider their ways, not to permit any longer their minds to be distracted by the things contrary to the will of Jehovah. This would be very appropriate, but it is doubtful whether this metaphorical meaning can be given to the verb. Others understand it literally, either in the sense of coming together for a religious assembly, or in the sense of crowding together in terror. An appeal to attend a religious assembly is out of place here, and the other interpretation takes no notice of the close connection that exists between verses 1, 2. Much uncertainty remains. The most suitable verb would be, "be ashamed, yea, be ashamed." **O nation not desired**—R. V., "O nation that hath no shame." The common meaning of the verb is "to long," "to desire," "to yearn" (Gen. xxxi, 30; Job xiv, 15), but "not desired," or margin, "not desirous," seems inappropriate here. If the idea inherent in the verb is retained it would be better to render, "O people which has no longing" (that is, for God), but if this were the thought "for God" could not be omitted (compare Psa. lxxxiv, 2). The rendering "that hath no shame," which is very appropriate here, finds support in Talmudic usage, and is not altogether foreign to the root meaning of the Hebrew verb, "to be pale" or "colorless." The Hebrew term for *silver* is derived from the same root, literally, "the pale metal." Paleness is caused by fright or terror. Now, to the Hebrew *to be ashamed* was practically the same as *to be confounded,* both ideas being expressed by the same verb; one is ashamed because he is confounded. Hence, *to be pale* (as a result of fright) may be equivalent to *to be ashamed.* A suitable sense would be secured by reading the verse, "Be ashamed, yea, be ashamed, O people that hath no shame." The prophet, after announcing the terrible judgment, looks about him and sees that his message has produced no effect. Aroused by the indifference of the listeners, he appeals to them to give some expression of contrition, else they will be utterly annihilated.

Verse 2 presents the reason for the earnest appeal in verse 1, but the present Hebrew text cannot be correct. On the basis of LXX. and Peshitto the text may be reconstructed to read, "Before you become as the drifting chaff, before the fierce anger of Jehovah come upon you, before there come upon you the day of Jehovah's wrath." The meaning of this is clear. Unless the sinners repent they will be swept away by the fierce wrath of Jehovah like chaff before the wind (see on Hos. xiii, 3). The last two clauses of this reconstructed text, as of the present text, look very much alike, and many consider the last one an explanatory duplicate of the preceding, added at a later time. This suggestion is supported by the Hexaplar Syriac version, which indicates by critical marks that the last clause was not in the original LXX. text; on the other hand, there are some Hebrew manuscripts which contain the last clause but omit the preceding. Either might be omitted without affecting the sense.

Verse 3 offers the one way of escape. It is worthy of note, however, that salvation is offered only to the meek;

the day of the LORD'S anger come upon you. 3 [d]Seek ye the LORD, [e]all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: [f]it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD'S anger.

4 For [g]Gaza shall be forsaken, and Ashkelon a desolation: they shall drive out Ashdod [h]at the noon day, and Ekron shall be rooted up. 5 Woe unto the inhabitants of [i]the sea coast, the nation of the Cherethites! the word of the LORD *is* against you; O [k]Canaan, the land of the Philistines, I will even destroy thee,

[d] Psa. 105. 4; Amos 5. 6.—[e] Psa. 76. 9.—[f] Joel 2. 14; Amos 5. 15; Jonah 3. 9.

[g] Jer. 47. 4, 5; Ezek. 25. 15; Amos 1. 6, 7, 8; Zech. 9. 5, 6.—[h] Jer. 6. 4; 15. 8.—[i] Ezek. 25. 16.—[k] Josh. 13. 3.

the "shameless" nation is doomed. **Seek ye Jehovah**—See on i, 6, and reference there. **Meek of the earth**—Since the inhabitants of Judah are addressed, it seems better to translate "of the land" (as in i, 18). The meek are those who walk humbly before Jehovah (see on Mic. vi, 8). **Which have wrought his judgment**—Better, R. V., "that have kept his ordinances"; such as are found, for example, in Isa. i, 16, 17; Mic. vi, 8. By doing these they have secured the favor of Jehovah; now they are exhorted to be even more zealous in doing the things acceptable to Jehovah. **In the day of Jehovah's anger**—See on i, 15, 18. **It may be ye shall be hid**—As one may find a place of shelter in the tempest, so the meek may be sheltered in the day of Jehovah (Isa. xxvi, 20). Even in the darkest hour the prophets maintain their confidence in the salvation of a remnant (see on Amos v, 15).

THE JUDGMENT UPON THE NATIONS, 4–15.

It is high time to look for shelter, for already the judgment is falling upon the surrounding nations, and soon it will reach Judah and Jerusalem (see introductory remarks on i, 2–18, and on ii, 1–3). The nations whose destruction is announced are (1) Philistia (4–7), (2) Moab, (3) Ammon (8–10), (4) Ethiopia (12), (5) Assyria (13–15). On the originality of these verses see Introduction, pp. 518ff.

4–7. *The doom of Philistia.* **Gaza . . . Ashkelon . . . Ashdod . . . Ekron**—See on Amos i, 6–8. Gath is again absent. **Shall be forsaken**—Depopulated. The original contains a word play which it is difficult to reproduce in English; some attempt it by reading, "*Gaza* shall be *forgotten*." **Drive out Ashdod**—That is, the inhabitants of Ashdod. **At the noonday**—Of uncertain meaning. Perhaps the thought is that it will be taken after a brief assault, lasting only from morning till noon, that is, with ease (compare Jer. xv, 8). A similar expression is found in an inscription of Esarhaddon, "Memphis, his capital, I took in the half of the day"—at noonday; here also the emphasis seems to be on the brevity of time in which the city was taken. **Shall be rooted up**—Another word play in the original. The expression implies complete destruction.

Verse 5 continues the threat upon the Philistines in the form of a woe. **Inhabitants of the seacoast**—Literally, *the line of the sea;* that is, the narrow strip stretching along the sea. The territory of the Philistines was located along the Mediterranean coast. **Nation of the Cherethites**—In apposition to the preceding (see on Amos i, 6–8; ix, 7; compare 1 Sam. xxx, 14). **O Canaan**—Since the prophet is concerned only with the Philistines, *Canaan* must denote Philistia, as is made clear also by the phrase which immediately follows, "the land of the Philistines." According to Josh. xiii, 1–3, the territory of the Philistines was thought a part of Canaan, but it is doubtful whether *Canaan* could be used as a synonym of *Philistia*. The text is improved if the word is omitted —"The word of Jehovah is against you (or, better, *against thee*), O land of the Philistines." The destruction is to be so complete that not a single inhabitant will be left. If these

that there shall be no inhabitant.
6 And the sea coast shall be
dwellings *and* cottages for shep-
herds, [l]and folds for flocks. 7
And the coast shall be for [m]the

[l] See Isa. 17. 2; verse 14.—[m] Verse 9; Isa. 11. 11; Mic. 4. 7; 5. 7, 8; Hag. 1. 12;

remnant of the house of Judah; they shall feed thereupon: in the houses of Ashkelon shall they lie down in the evening: [2]for the LORD their God shall [n]visit

2. 2.—[2] Or, *when*, etc.—[n] Exod. 4. 31; Luke 1. 68.

threats were written originally in the *Kînāh* meter (see on Amos v, 1–3), the rhythm becomes greatly improved by an additional alteration of the text, so that verse 5 will read, "Woe, inhabitants of the seacoast, nation of the Cherethites! I will destroy thee, that there shall be no inhabitant, land of the Philistines."

The general thought of verse 6 is clear, but in details there is much uncertainty. The text may have suffered in transmission; LXX., which differs considerably from the Hebrew, reads, "And Crete shall become dwelling places for shepherds, and folds for flocks." This involves the omission of one expression from the Hebrew, "the seacoast," which might have been repeated accidentally from verse 5, the transposition of two words, and a change in the vocalization of another. **Crete**—Not the island of Crete, but Philistia; the former is supposed to have been the original home of the Philistines (see on Amos ix, 7). The term "Cherethites" (verse 5) is derived from the same word. To improve the rhythm some omit even the word translated "Crete," which might be "a mere transcriptional duplicate of the preceding word, as the letters forming the two words are frequently confused." With this omission verse 6 would read, "And it (the land of the Philistines) shall become dwellings (or, *pastures*, Amos i, 2) for shepherds, and folds for flocks." Marti goes still further and, continuing 5b, reads, "And thou shalt become. . . " Whether any of these emendations are accepted or not, the meaning remains the same; the land of the Philistines is to be so completely deserted that shepherds will be able to pasture and fold their flocks wherever they like.

Verse 7 adds to the threat of the destruction of the Philistines the promise that the "remnant of Judah" shall possess the territory deserted by its present inhabitants. A similar promise is found in Amos ix, 12. The English translation of the first clause, "And the coast shall be for the remnant of the house of Judah," disregards the grammatical construction of the original, which can be rendered only, "And it (the land of the Philistines, verse 5) shall be a portion for the remnant of the house of Judah." The ordinary English translation follows substantially LXX., which reads, however, "the seacoast." **Remnant of the house of Judah**—Must be identical with the "meek" of verse 3, who escape the judgment by heeding the prophet's exhortation. **Shall feed**—R. V. adds rightly, "their flocks." **They**—The remnant. The grammatical construction is according to sense. **Thereupon**—Upon what? If the text is correct the reference must be to the "pastures" of verse 6 (for the grammatical inaccuracy involved in the use of a masculine pronoun referring to a feminine noun compare G.-K., 135o). Wellhausen divides the word and transposes one letter, so that it reads "by the sea" instead of "upon them." This would remove the grammatical peculiarity. **In the houses of Ashkelon shall they lie down in the evening**—During the day they will feed their flocks in the fields of the Philistines; when darkness sets in they seek shelter in their towns. Ashkelon represents the Philistine towns in general; it seems to be selected rather than any other for rhythmical reasons. The closing sentence gives the cause of the transformation in the fortunes of Judah, or at least of the remnant. **God shall visit them**—In mercy. The same word is used fre-

them, and [o]turn away their captivity.

8 [p]I have heard the reproach of Moab, and [q]the revilings of the children of Ammon, whereby they have reproached my people, and [r]magnified *themselves* against their border. 9 Therefore *as* I live, saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Surely [s]Moab shall be as Sodom, and [t]the children of Ammon as Gomorrah, [u]*even* the breeding of nettles, and

[o] Psa. 126. 1; Jer. 29. 14; chap. 3. 20.—[p] Jer. 48. 27; Ezek. 25. 8.—[q] Ezek. 25. 3, 6.—[r] Jer. 49. 1.—[s] Isa. 15; Jer. 48; Ezek. 25. 9; Amos 2. 1.—[t] Amos 1. 13.—[u] Gen. 19. 25; Deut. 29. 23; Isa. 13. 19; 34. 13; Jer. 49. 18; 50. 40.

quently in the sense of "punish," that is, visit in judgment (compare i, 8, 9). **Turn away their captivity**—R. V., "bring back their captivity," or, restore their fortune. The expression does not presuppose the exile as accomplished, nor even the expectation of an exile (see on Hos. vi, 11; Amos ix, 15; and p. 133).

Marti and others reject verse 7 in its present form as a later addition (see p. 518), but the former thinks that the verse contains some original elements. These he finds, in a corrupt form, in the second and third clauses of the verse; as restored by him they read, continuing verse 6, "In thy ruins they lie down, they shall feed by the sea." The subject of the verbs he takes to be Arab nomads.

8–11. *The doom of Moab and Ammon.* On the location of these nations see comments on Amos i, 13–15; ii, 1–3. **I have heard**—The evil deeds and words of the Moabites and Ammonites have reached the ear of Jehovah (compare Gen. iv, 10; xviii, 20). **Reproach . . . revilings**—Expressed not only in words, but also in hostile attacks upon the territory of the Hebrews. These were not confined to any one period, but continued throughout the entire history (compare Num. xxiiff.; Judg. iii, 12ff.; x, 7ff.; 1 Sam. xi, 1–5; 2 Sam. viii, 2 and passages mentioned below). Other prophets condemn these two nations for their hostile attitude toward the people of Jehovah (Moab, Num. xxiv, 17; Isa. xv, xvi; Jer. xlviii; Ezek. xxv, 8ff.; Ammon, Amos i, 13–15; Jer. xlix; Ezek. xxv, 1–7). **Reproached my people**—Every attack and every act of hostility constituted an insult to the people that was under the special protection of Jehovah. **Magnified themselves against their border**—That is, the border of my people; LXX. reads "my borders," that is, the borders of Jehovah's land (compare Jer. xlviii, 26, 42). "Magnified themselves" is literally "they made great" or "did great things," which means not only "they *uttered* great things" but "they *did* great things" as well. The great and arrogant deeds consisted chiefly in violating the boundaries of Israel and endeavoring to annex Israelitish territory (Amos i, 13; Jer. xlix, 1).

Verses 9, 10 announce the judgment. **As I live**—A formula of asseveration, which is very common in Ezekiel (see on Amos iv, 2; viii, 14). The accumulation of the divine titles serves to add solemnity to the utterance (compare Isa. i, 24). **Jehovah of hosts**—See on Hos. xii, 5. **God of Israel**—Emphasizes the peculiar relation of Jehovah to Israel, and his special interest in its welfare. **Sodom, . . . Gomorrah**—The overthrow of the cities of the Plain (Gen. xix, 25) is frequently used as a type of utter destruction (Isa. i, 9; Deut. xxix, 23). The next three expressions describe the completeness of the destruction. **Breeding of nettles**—R. V., "possession of nettles"; margin, "of wild vetches." The territories shall remain uncultivated and desolate, so that nothing but nettles will grow there. The meaning of the first word is not quite certain; "possession" expresses the right idea. The precise plant meant is uncertain. Post thinks that the word is a generic term which may be applied to any wild thorn or shrub. Tristram identifies it with the "prickly acanthus, a very common and troublesome weed . . . abundant

salt pits, and a perpetual desolation: [x]the residue of my people shall spoil them, and the remnant of my people shall possess them. **10** This shall they have [y]for their pride, because they have reproached and magnified *themselves* against the people of the LORD of hosts. **11** The LORD *will be* terrible unto them: for he will [3]famish all the gods of the earth; [z]and *men* shall worship him, every one from his

[x] Verse 7.——[y] Isa. 16. 6; Jer. 48. 29.

[3] Heb. *make lean.*——[z] Mal. 1. 11; John 4. 21.

among ruins" (compare Isa. xiv, 23). **Salt pits**—Where salt pits exist vegetation is dead; hence the presence of salt pits symbolizes desolation and barrenness (compare Deut. xxix, 23; Isa. xiii, 19; Jer. xlix, 18; also, "he sowed it with salt," Judg. ix, 45). **Perpetual desolation**—There is to be no restoration. **Residue . . . remnant**—See on verse 7; compare verse 3, and reference there. **Shall spoil them**—Better, *shall take them as spoil;* the expression is identical in meaning with "shall possess [R. V., "inherit"] them," in the last clause. "Them" some commentators refer to the *people* of Moab and Ammon in distinction from the *land,* which is threatened with utter destruction and desolation. This distinction is made "because a land turned into an eternal desert and salt steppe would not be adapted for a possession for the people of Jehovah." It is very doubtful, however, that the author meant to make this distinction. The description must not be pressed too literally, and there can be no serious objection to the supposition that the prophet means to threaten two distinct calamities, complete destruction and annexation to Judah.

Verse 10 repeats the statement of the guilt which is responsible for the judgment (see on verse 8). In the last clause LXX. omits "the people of," and reads, "against Jehovah of hosts" (see on *their border,* verse 8).

In verses 8, 9 Jehovah is the speaker, so also in verse 12; therefore verse 12 forms a natural continuation of verse 9. In verses 10, 11 Jehovah is spoken of in the third person, which makes it quite probable that these verses contain the words of another speaker. If verse 10 is original (see pp. 519f.) it must be explained as a repetition by the prophet, in his own words, of the condemnation which in verse 8 he places in the mouth of Jehovah. In a similar manner would have to be explained verse 11. The prophet has announced, in the words of Jehovah, the complete destruction of Moab and Ammon; before turning to another nation he makes a comment out of his own heart: "Jehovah will be terrible unto them. . . . " **Terrible**—In causing utter destruction. When they see his terrible power they will recognize him as *the* God (Mal. i, 14). **Unto them**—The people of Moab and Ammon. **For**—Better, *yea;* introducing a new act of Jehovah (G.-K., 148d). He will not be satisfied with overawing the two nations; before the whole world he will show himself supreme. **He will famish all the gods of the earth**—A peculiar expression; literally, *he will make lean.* If the verb is original the thought of the prophet seems to be that by his terrible manifestations Jehovah will prove himself the true God with such effectiveness that he will take away from the deities now worshiped by the other nations their devotees with their gifts. By the withdrawal of these gifts the deities are made lean, and finally they will starve to death. In other words, the prophet looks forward to the time when the nothingness of all the other deities will be recognized, and when all men will worship Jehovah. **Every one from his place**—The most natural interpretation of these words is that every one will worship Jehovah wherever he lives, that is, without going to a central sanctuary. This marks a distinct advance over passages like Isa. ii, 2–4; Mic. iv, 1–4, and moves in the direction of the utterances of Jesus in John iv, 20ff. The interpretation of Kleinert and

place, *even* all [a]the isles of the heathen.

12 [b]Ye Ethiopians also, ye *shall be* slain by [c]my sword. 13 And he will stretch out his hand against the north, and [d]destroy Assyria; and will make Nineveh a desolation, *and* dry like a wilderness. 14 And [e]flocks shall lie down in the midst of her, all [f]the beasts of the

[a] Gen. 10. 5.—[b] Isa. 18. 1; 20. 4; Jer. 46. 9; Ezek. 30. 9.—[c] Psa. 17. 13.—[d] Isa. 10. 12; Ezek. 31. 3; Nah. 1. 1; 2. 10; 3. 15, 18. —[e] Verse 6.—[f] Isa. 13. 21, 22.

others, which makes the prophet say that everyone will go from his home to Jerusalem to worship there, is less natural. **All the isles of the heathen**—R. V., "of the nations"; margin, "coast lands." The term seems to have been applied in the beginning to the coast lands and islands of the Mediterranean, but in time it became equivalent to "distant regions" (Isa. xli, 1; lix, 18).

12. *The doom of Ethiopia.* **Ethiopians**—Or, *Cushites.* The inhabitants of the vast and undefined territory immediately south of Egypt. The country—Heb. *Kûsh*—is mentioned frequently in connection with Egypt (Nah. iii, 9; Isa. xx, 3–5). During the flourishing period of Egyptian history Ethiopia was subject to the kings of Egypt, but toward the close of the eighth century B. C. an Ethiopian dynasty usurped the throne of the latter, which it was able to hold for only a brief period. At the time of Zephaniah the Ethiopian rulers had been expelled again; nevertheless, some have supposed that in this passage Ethiopia stands for Egypt. It is undoubtedly true that a threat against the near and powerful Egypt would make a deeper impression upon the people of Judah than a threat against the distant Ethiopia, and, as a matter of fact, the Scythians never went farther than the northern borders of Egypt; yet there seems insufficient warrant for identifying the two. It is preferable to retain Ethiopia and take it as a representative of the remote south, just as the islands of the nations represent the west and Assyria the east or northeast; the dreaded enemy comes from the north. **Ye shall be slain**—Hebrew, "they shall be slain"; the ancient versions read the second person, which is to be preferred. The terrible invader will make a terrible end of the Ethiopians.

13–15. *The doom of Nineveh.* **Stretch out his hand**—See on i, 4. **Against the north**—From Ethiopia in the far south Jehovah will turn northward to strike Assyria. **Assyria**—The beginnings of the Assyrian empire are shrouded in obscurity, but from about the middle of the twelfth century until near the close of the seventh century B. C. it was the great Asiatic world power. Nearly all the prophets, beginning with Amos, look upon it as the divinely appointed agent to execute judgment upon the rebellious Israel; but several of them are convinced that it has gone beyond its commission and that its cruel policy of conquest is contrary to Jehovah's will; therefore they heap upon Assyria the severest denunciations (for example, Isa. x, 5ff.; Mic. v, 6; the entire Book of Nahum). **Nineveh**—The capital of Assyria in the days of Zephaniah (see on Jonah iii, 2, 3). **Desolation, . . . dry like a wilderness**—To make Nineveh dry like a wilderness would require a manifestation of extraordinary power, for the city was situated on the banks of one river, the Tigris, while another, the Choser, flowed right through it.

14. In the ruins desert animals will take up their abode. **Flocks**—R. V., "herds." A word used elsewhere only of animals tended by herdsmen, but since the rest of verse 14 seems to be an expansion of the term, it must be used here of wild beasts and creatures of the desert. Wellhausen changes one letter and transposes two, which gives the name "Arabians." **All the beasts of the nations**—Margin R. V., "all beasts of every kind"; LXX., "all the beasts of the field." The common English translation is the most literal

nations: both the [4] [g]cormorant and the bittern shall lodge in the [5]upper lintels of it; *their* voice shall sing in the windows; desolation *shall be* in the thresholds: [6]for he shall uncover the [h]cedar work.

[4] Or, *pelican.*——[g] Isa. 34. 11, 14.——[5] Or, *knops*, or, *chapiters.*

[6] Or, *when he hath uncovered.*——[h] Jer. 22. 14.

reproduction of the Hebrew text, but the meaning of the phrase is not clear. Some have understood "beasts" figuratively of wild and ferocious men, perhaps the shepherds of the flocks (but see preceding comment), as if the prophet wanted to say that wild men coming from different nations would lodge in the ruins of Nineveh. This figurative use of "beasts" is not very probable. The LXX. reading gives better sense, and we may be justified in altering the present Hebrew text to make it agree with it. The marginal translation also gives good sense, but to get it from the present Hebrew text is a difficult task. The present text may be retained, if we give to the word translated "nations" a meaning which it does not have ordinarily, "mass" or "swarms" (compare Joel i, 6; Prov. xxx, 25), and render the whole phrase "all kinds of beasts in mass." This, in apposition to the preceding "flocks," would express the idea that great masses of desert animals of every kind will settle in the ruins of the destroyed city. **Cormorant**—R. V., "pelican." There is much uncertainty about the animals or birds mentioned in this verse. Undoubtedly all are such as are accustomed to inhabit ruins and desolate places. The translation of R. V. is generally accepted as correct (compare "pelican of the wilderness," Psa. cii, 6). H. Duhm (*Die bösen Geister im Alten Testament*) sees here a reference to demons that were thought to dwell in ruins. **Bittern**—R. V., "porcupine." The latter is the meaning which LXX. gives to the word and is accepted by most commentators. The two words occur together in a similar description in Isa. xxxiv, 11 (compare xiv, 23). **The upper lintels**—R. V., "capitals." See on Amos ix, 1. These capitals are thought of as lying on the ground, so that even porcupines can make their homes in them. "The seer has such a mass of ruins in view as Baalbek presents to-day; the giant capitals which encircled the buildings lie like broken cornstalks; on the other hand, the walls still stand in ruin, with desolate threshold and window, through which the wind whistles." **Their voice will sing in the windows**—Literally, *a voice shall sing;* or, better, since it is an exclamation, *Hark! they sing!* (See on i, 14.) The prophet imagines himself standing in the midst of the ruins, and, hearing a voice, he exclaims, "Hark! they sing!" The subject of "sing" must be the creatures inhabiting the ruins; hence "sing" must be understood in the general sense of making a noise or uttering a sound, a meaning which the verb does not have ordinarily. Instead of "voice" (=hark) many read "owls"; the whole clause, "owls shall sing in the windows." If the emendation suggested for the next clause is correct, a comparison with Isa. xxxiv, 11, suggests that "owl" was read here originally. It is even possible that the two words translated "a voice shall sing" should be read as one, and that this one word is the corrupt form of a noun meaning "owls," so that the whole clause would read, "owls shall be in the windows." **Desolation shall be in the thresholds**—LXX. reads, with a change of one letter, "ravens" for "desolation," and this fits admirably in the context, "ravens shall be in the thresholds." **For he shall uncover the cedar work**—A much-discussed clause whose meaning is uncertain. It seems to state the reason why the city will become the habitation of desert birds and animals. "He shall uncover" might be understood in the indefinite sense "one shall uncover"—they shall uncover, that is, the enemies who will

15 This *is* the rejoicing city [i]that dwelt carelessly, [k]that said in her heart, I *am*, and *there is* none beside me: how is she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in! every one that passeth by her [l]shall hiss, *and* [m]wag his hand.

[i] Isa. 47. 8.—[k] Rev. 18. 7.—[l] Job 27. 23; Lam. 2. 15; Ezek. 27. 36.—[m] Nah. 3. 19.

execute the divine judgment. The same verb is translated in Psa. cxxxvii, 7, "rase" (to the foundation), and implies destruction. The word translated "cedar work" occurs in this form only here; if original it must refer to the costly woodwork in the palaces and temples of Nineveh. In order to remove the peculiar form some change the vocalization so as to read "her cedar" = her cedar work, that is, the cedar work of the city. Others see in the word a corrupt form of a verb similar in meaning to the other verb, so that the whole clause would read, "they shall destroy, they shall rase." All these suggestions are more or less unsatisfactory, and much uncertainty remains; perhaps the text is in disorder.

Verse 15 contains a taunt-song over the fallen city. **This**—The ruin inhabited by desert animals and birds. **The rejoicing city**—R. V., "joyous." Good fortune seemed to smile on Nineveh, hence all was joy and exultation. **Dwelt carelessly**—Added to the natural strength of its site were extensive fortifications, so that the city seemed impregnable; in consequence her inhabitants were careless and boastful. **I am, and there is none beside me**—Literally, *I am, and none else* (compare Isa. xlvii, 8). Her armies had conquered almost the whole known world, from all directions tribute and countless treasures were being brought to the city, hence there was some ground for the boast. But pride always comes before the fall. The glory of Nineveh will be turned into shame. **Desolation**—See on verse 13. **A place for beasts**—See on verse 14. **Shall hiss**—An expression of derision and scorn (Mic. vi, 16; Jer. xviii, 16).

CHAPTER III.

WOE to [1] [2]her that is filthy and polluted, to the oppressing city! 2 She [a]obeyed not the voice; she [b]received not [3]correction; she trusted not in the LORD; she drew

[1] Or, *gluttonous*.—[2] Heb. *craw*.—[a] Jer. 22. 21.—[b] Jer. 5. 3.—[3] Or, *instruction*.

Wag his hand—Also a gesture of scorn, equivalent to *wag his head* (Jer. xviii, 16; compare Nah. iii, 19).

CHAPTER III.

Woe upon the Polluted City of Jerusalem, 1–7.

In iii, 1, the prophet turns once more to Jerusalem, "the rebellious and unclean, the city of oppression." He strikes the same notes as in chapter i, only here he emphasizes almost exclusively moral and social vices. Her princes are thieves, her prophets "bold jugglers instead of God's witnesses," her priests profane the sanctuary (1–4). Jehovah has done all he could to win the city back to purity, but in vain; her inhabitants "corrupted all their doings" (5–7).

Woe—Introduces not only a threat, but also a lament, prompted by sorrow and compassion. **Filthy**—Better, R. V., "rebellious," that is, against Jehovah. **Polluted**—By the heathenish religious practices condemned in i, 4–6, as well as by the acts of violence and bloodshed described in i, 8, 9, and iii, 3–7. **Oppressing**—Not other cities. Within the city itself the poor and weak were being oppressed by the strong and powerful. A more forceful rendering would be, "Woe, rebellious and polluted! city of oppression!"

Verses 2–4 explain the epithets in verse 1; verse 2 explains "rebellious." Jerusalem's rebellion against Jehovah manifested itself under four aspects: (1) **She obeyed not the voice**—The voice of Jehovah as it spoke through the prophets (see on Amos ii, 11, 12). (2) **She received not correction**—Margin, "instruction." If the marginal

not near to her God. 3 [c]Her princes within her *are* roaring lions; her judges *are* [d]evening wolves; they gnaw not the bones till the morrow.

[c] Ezek. 22. 27; Mic. 3. 9–11.

[d] Hab. 1. 8.

translation is correct this clause is practically equivalent to the preceding. It is more likely, however, that the prophet is thinking of instruction given by means of chastisements, such as are described, for example, in Amos iv, 6–11, or Isa. ix, 8–21. The two clauses are found together again in Jer. vii, 28. (3) **She trusted not in Jehovah**—The original is more forceful, *Jehovah* standing at the head: "In Jehovah she did not trust." Instead, she trusted in Assyria (2 Kings xvi, 7–9) or in Egypt (Isa. xxx, 31). Compare also the constant complaint of Hosea (see p. 19f.). (4) **She drew not near to her God**—In spirit and truth, as she should have done in view of the covenant relation existing between Jehovah and Israel (compare the refrain in Amos iv, 6–11, "but ye did not return unto me"). Their worship was mere form, and not a true approach to Jehovah.

Verses 3, 4 explain "polluted" and "oppressing" (verse 1). The corruption is widespread. Political and ecclesiastical leaders are equally guilty (compare Mic. iii, 9–11). **Princes**—See on Hos. iii, 4. **Roaring lions**—Seeking whom they might devour (compare Ezek. xix, 1–3; 1 Pet. v, 8). **Judges**—The men in judicial positions, whose duty it was to guard the rights of others; instead, they devour all like wild beasts. **Evening wolves**—See on Hab. i, 8. In both passages LXX. reads erroneously "wolves of Arabia." Wolves may be less powerful than lions, but they are equally greedy and bloodthirsty. **They gnaw not the bones till the morrow**—R. V., "they leave nothing till the morrow." The meaning of the verb is uncertain. Another translation has been suggested, "that have not gnawed a bone in (=since) morning"; as a result they are hungry and ferocious in the evening. The form of the verb is in favor of the last translation, but the preposition before "morning" cannot mean "since." The translation "leave" is supported by some of the ancient versions, but it can be had from the Hebrew only in a roundabout way. The translation "gnaw the bones" assumes, not without reason, that the verb is a denominative form of a noun "bone." The verb occurs only three times in the Old Testament—in Num. xxiv, 8; Ezek. xxiii, 34, and here. The passage in Ezekiel is thought to be corrupt, therefore it is of little value in determining the meaning of the verb. In Numbers it means "to gnaw" (a bone, but the noun is added); it is quite natural, therefore, to give the verb the same meaning in this passage, and this A. V. does. Schwally, unable to see any sense in the clause as it stands at present, omits the negative and reads, "they do gnaw bones till morning"; that is, all night long they go about devouring everything that comes in their way. The negative might easily have slipped in from verse 2, but if Schwally is right the *imperfect* would be expected in Hebrew instead of the *perfect*. It seems better to retain the negative. The prophet refers to the judges as evening wolves; they are ravenous, tearing everything that comes in their way. In the light of this statement "to gnaw bones until morning" would be practically equivalent to "to spend all night in devouring the prey." What the prophet means to say is that they are too greedy to do this; they do not leave anything until morning, but devour all at one time. The translations of the ancients may be explained as attempts to present smoother readings. The expression is undoubtedly awkward, but the interpretation given is that favored by the present Hebrew text, which may, however, be in disorder.

The religious leaders are no better.

4 Her [e]prophets *are* light *and* treacherous persons: her priests have polluted the sanctuary, they have done [f]violence to the law. 5 [g]The just LORD [h]*is* in the midst thereof; he will not do iniquity: [4]every morning doth he bring his judgment to light, he faileth not; but

[e] Jer. 23. 11, 32; Lam. 2. 14; Hos. 9. 7. —[f] Ezek. 22. 26.—[g] Deut. 32. 4.

[h] Verse 15, 17; see Mic. 3. 11.—[4] Heb. *morning by morning.*

Her prophets—The false prophets (see on Mic. iii, 7), not men like Zephaniah. **Light**—Vainglorious and boastful; LXX., "carried by the wind"—bags of wind. "The figure is that of the boiling over of water, and the word characterizes the prophets as vaporers, extravagant and arrogant in their own imaginations and conceits, their minds lacking the restraint of the word of God under which the true prophets spoke" (Jer. xxiii, 22; Ezek. xxii, 28). **Treacherous persons**—Literally, *men of treacheries.* The verb underlying the noun "treachery" is used frequently of faithlessness to the marriage vow, in a literal or figurative sense (Jer. iii, 20; Hos. vi, 7); hence the expression may mean "men who are faithless to Jehovah;" but an additional thought is implied: because they are faithless to Jehovah they betray and lead astray the people. **Priests**—Condemned severely by Micah (iii, 11) and especially by Hosea (iv, 4ff.). **Polluted the sanctuary**—Better, *that which is holy,* which includes everything that belongs to Jehovah or is connected with him. These things they have profaned or polluted by disregarding their sanctity and treating them to suit their own fancies and interests (compare Ezek. xxii, 26). **They have done violence to the law**—Not *law* in the narrow sense of that term, nor the laws concerning *clean* and *unclean* things, but every expression of the will of Jehovah (see on Hos. iv, 6). In trying to serve their own interests they have disregarded the teaching of Jehovah, and in order to justify their own conduct they have perverted it (Isa. v, 20).

5, 6. In striking contrast to the people's unrighteousness is Jehovah's righteousness. He manifests himself continually as a God of mercy and a God of power. Verse 5 emphasizes the former, verse 6 the latter; both have failed to accomplish the conversion of the people. **The just Lord is in the midst thereof**—Better, R. V., "Jehovah in the midst of her is righteous." Jerusalem was in a special sense the dwelling place of Jehovah (compare Isa. ii, 3). **Righteous** (R. V.)—He always did that which was right and proper in view of the covenant relation existing between him and Israel (compare Deut. xxxii, 4). **He will not do**—Better, *he doeth not,* for verse 5 describes the conduct of Jehovah in the past, present, and future. **Iniquity**—That which is contrary to the spirit of the covenant. 5b enumerates some of the things that Jehovah does for his people from day to day. **Every morning**—Literally, *morning by morning.* **Bring his judgment to light**—R. V., "justice." *Judgment* is used here not in the sense of punitive judgment, which Jehovah executes daily, nor of his righteous will which he makes known through his prophets and other teachers, but of his *righteous acts,* which he executes from day to day in carrying on the government of the world. **He faileth not**—Literally, *not is omitted*=without fail. **But the unjust knoweth no shame**—The righteous acts of Jehovah awaken no response in those who are unrighteous, that is, those who live without regard for the covenant that exists between Jehovah and them. Without shame or contrition they persist in their evil conduct.

Verse 5 contains several linguistic peculiarities; as a result textual corruptions have been suspected, and various emendations have been proposed. Marti reads, "Jehovah in the midst of her is righteous, he does no iniquity; morning by morning he shows forth his righteous acts (er setzt in Kraft seine Ordnung);

[i]the unjust knoweth no shame. 6 I have cut off the nations: their [5]towers are desolate; I made their streets waste, that none passeth by: their cities are destroyed, so that there is no man, that there is none inhabitant. 7 [k]I said, Surely thou wilt fear me, thou wilt receive instruction; so their dwelling should not be cut off, howsoever I punished them: but they rose early, *and* [l]corrupted all their doings.

8 Therefore [m]wait ye upon me,

[i] Jer. 3. 3; 6. 15; 8. 12.—[5] Or, *corners.*—[k] So Jer. 8. 6.

[l] Gen. 6. 12.—[m] Psa. 27. 14; 37. 34; Prov. 20. 22.

light is never misled, error is unknown."

Verse 6 points to divine manifestations in history, which should have had a salutary effect upon the people. **I have cut off**—The change to the first person is unexpected, but there is no reason for doubting its originality. To make the address more forceful Jehovah is introduced as the speaker. **The nations**—Literally, *nations*, without the article. The reference is not to the nations threatened with destruction in ii, 4–15, but to nations cut off in the past. **Towers**—See on i, 16. Here the term seems to include palaces or citadels. Fortifications, streets (open country), and cities were wasted so completely that no one passed along the streets and no inhabitant remained in the city (compare Jer. xxxiii, 10).

7. The deeds enumerated in verses 5, 6 Jehovah did in the expectation that his righteous acts would bring Jerusalem to her senses; this verse declares that the expectation was not realized. **I said**—To myself; I thought (Jer. iii, 19), when planning the acts. **Surely thou wilt fear me**—Perhaps the third person should be read—"Surely she will fear me, she will receive instruction." Jehovah expected that as a result of his manifestations the inhabitants of Jerusalem would maintain a reverential attitude toward him (see on Hos. x, 3). **So their dwelling should not be cut off, howsoever I punished them**—The pronouns "their" and "them" are in the original "her," that is, Jerusalem. The thought expressed in this translation seems to be that Jehovah hoped that the acts of his providence would lead the people to repentance, so that he would not be compelled to cut them off from their dwelling place. R. V. gives a different meaning to the second clause, "according to all that I have appointed concerning her." This might be understood as supplying the reason for the cutting off—Jehovah had appointed it; or it might give the reason for Jehovah's hope for repentance; he desired the city to remain, for he had ordained it so. Both A. V. and R. V. do more or less violence to the Hebrew text. The difficulties vanish if the reading of LXX. and Peshitto, which presupposes a slight change in a single word, is substituted for the present Hebrew text, "and not will vanish from her eyes all that I have commanded her." Jehovah expected his providence to lead his people to loyal obedience. **They rose early, and corrupted all their doings**—They were so anxious to do wrong that they rose early in the morning; equivalent to "they zealously corrupted all their doings" (compare Jer. vii, 13; xi, 8). The expectation of Jehovah was not realized; on the contrary, the corruption increased.

The World Judgment and its Effects, 8–13.

Since all warnings have failed, the judgment is inevitable. But in the midst of the rebellious nation there is a faithful remnant (ii, 3); to it are addressed verses 8ff. It is exhorted to remain loyal in the midst of the calamity, for the future has brighter things in store.

8. **Therefore wait ye**—The faithful remnant is exhorted not to despair, but to wait patiently for the manifestation of Jehovah that will result in its exaltation. **Upon me**—Better, R.

saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination *is* to [n]gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indigna-

[n] Joel 3. 2.—[o] Chap. 1. 18.

tion, *even* all my fierce anger: for all the earth [o]shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy. 9 For then will I turn to the people [p]a pure [q]language, that they may

[p] Isa. 19. 18.—[q] Heb. *lip.*

V., "for me," that is, for my manifestation, as described in the succeeding clauses. **Until the day**—The preposition is the same as the one translated "for" in the preceding clause, and should be rendered so here. **Rise up to the prey**—The meaning of "to the prey" is obscure. Davidson says, "If this meaning be accepted, the impending judgment of God is expressed figuratively as a hostile attack upon him, and the question what is meant by the 'prey' must not be asked: the prey is merely part of the metaphor." A more satisfactory reading, requiring the change of only one vowel point, is offered by LXX. and Peshitto, "for a witness" instead of "to the prey." Jehovah will rise up as accusing witness (Mic. i, 2) and judge. **Determination**—Literally, *judgment,* which may be used in the sense of *judicial decision* or *sentence;* if so, the thought is that Jehovah has determined to execute judgment. Or it may mean *judicial right* or *prerogative;* as the judge of all the earth Jehovah has the right to summon the nations before the judgment bar. The former is preferable. The contents of the determination are brought out in the rest of verse 8 and in the following verses. **That I may assemble the kingdoms**—Following LXX. the pronominal suffix should be omitted from the second verb and the two clauses should be coördinated: "to gather the nations, to assemble the kingdoms," that is, to judgment. The thought is not implied that they will be summoned to one locality, that is, to Jerusalem, where the judgment is to be executed (compare Joel iii, 2; Zech. xiv, 2). **Pour . . . indignation, . . . fierce anger**—Aroused by the sin and rebellion of the nations (see on i, 15, and references there; also on Hos. v, 10). **All the earth**—Including Judah and Jerusalem. **The fire of my jealousy**—See on i, 18, and reference there.

Most recent commentators doubt the originality of verses 9, 10, chiefly because these verses are thought to interrupt the connection between 8 and 11. Even Davidson thinks that the omission of at least verse 10 would add force and dignity to the utterance. That there is much uncertainty about the meaning of these verses must be admitted, and yet it is not quite clear that verse 11 is the natural continuation of verse 8, or that the thought of verses 9, 10 is foreign to the context. Verse 8 contains, along with an announcement of an impending world judgment, an exhortation to a remnant, to remain faithful in the midst of the impending calamity. The succeeding verses, beginning with verse 9, may be understood as supplying the reason why the remnant may safely trust in Jehovah. The judgment about to fall is not sent by a wrathful God who delights in destruction, but by one who has at heart the best interests of mankind; and when it has served its disciplinary purpose its beneficent effects will be seen in the conversion of many. Verses 9, 10 speak of the effects upon the nations, verses 11–13 of those upon Judah. When interpreted in this manner, verses 9–13, just as they stand, seem to make a good continuation of verse 8, which announces the coming of the judgment.

If the verses are retained they express the thought that by means of the judgment many will be converted to Jehovah; even far-distant nations will bring their offerings to him. **To the people**—Literally, *to peoples;* that is, people among all nations of the earth (verse 8). **Will I turn . . . a pure language**—Literally, *a pure lip*

all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one [7]consent. **10** [q]From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my suppliants, *even* the daughter of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering. **11** In that day shalt thou not be ashamed for all thy doings, wherein thou hast

[7] Heb. *shoulder.*—[q] Psa. 68. 31; Isa. 18. 1, 7; 60. 4, etc.; Mal. 1. 11; Acts 8. 27.

(compare 1 Sam. x, 9). The expression is equivalent to "I will turn their impure lip into a pure lip," so that they will be fit to worship Jehovah (Isa. vi, 5). *Lip* does not stand for *language*, as the English translators seem to have thought. Since thoughts proceed from the heart, the purity or impurity of the lip depends upon the purity or impurity of the heart; therefore, the purification of the lips presupposes the purification of the heart (compare Isa. vi, 7). When heart and lip are cleansed they will "call upon Jehovah," that is, worship him. **Serve him with one consent**—Literally, *with one shoulder*, which LXX. interprets "under one yoke." The figure is that of animals working together, with a single yoke placed over their shoulders. The converted people will coöperate heartily in the service of Jehovah (Jer. xxxii, 39).

Verse 10 is obscure. **Ethiopia**—See on ii, 12. Here it is mentioned as a representative of far-distant countries. **My suppliants, even the daughter of my dispersed**—If this is the correct translation, the homecoming of the dispersed Jews to bring offerings to their God is predicted here. Another possible translation of verse 10 is, "From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia shall they (the converted people of verse 9) bring my suppliants, the daughter of my dispersed, as mine offering." With this translation the thought is that far-distant peoples will bring back the dispersed Jews as an offering to Jehovah. The correctness of the present Hebrew text has been questioned, however, chiefly for two reasons: 1. Up to this point there has been no reference to a dispersion (but compare verse 19). 2. The expression "daughter of my dispersed" is peculiar. Combinations like "daughter of Zion," "daughter of Babylon," etc., are quite common, but in all such phrases "daughter" is connected with a place name. Three very slight alterations would give what many consider a very much better text: "From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia devotees of the daughter of Put will bring offerings to me." The devotees are people of the land of Put who have been won to the service of Jehovah in the manner indicated in verse 9. *Put* is to be identified with the *Punt* of the Egyptian inscriptions, the name given to the territory comprising the whole African coast from the desert east of Upper Egypt to the modern Somali country, which brings it near Ethiopia. If this emendation is accepted verse 10 must be considered the continuation of verse 9. From the very ends of the earth the people will come and pay homage to Jehovah.

In verses 11–13 the prophet explains what the effect of the judgment will be upon Judah and Jerusalem. **In that day**—The day of judgment and purification (8–10). **Shalt thou not be ashamed for all thy doings**—R. V., "shalt thou not be put to shame." With the former translation the meaning is that they will no longer feel shame, either because they will no longer do anything for which they need to be ashamed, or because their former sins have so completely passed away that sense of guilt or self-condemnation for them is no longer called for; with the other the thought is that Jerusalem and Judah will not be put to shame completely, that is, will not be destroyed completely; only the proud and arrogant will be cut off, while the rest will be preserved and exalted. The latter thought fits better in the context. **Wherein thou hast transgressed**—See on i, 4–6, 8, 9; iii, 1–4. **Then**—**In that day. I will**

transgressed against me: for then I will take away out of the midst of thee them that [r]rejoice in thy pride, and thou shalt no more be haughty [s]because of my holy mountain. 12 I will also leave in the midst of thee [s]an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the LORD. 13 [t]The remnant of Israel [u]shall not do iniquity, [x]nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for [y]they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make *them* afraid.

[r] Jer. 7. 4; Mic. 3. 11; Matt. 3. 9.—[s] Heb. *in my holy.*—[s] Isa. 14. 32; Zech. 11. 11; Matt. 5. 3; 1 Cor. 1. 27, 28; James 2. 5.—[t] Mic. 4. 7; chap. 2. 7.—[u] Isa. 60. 21.—[x] Isa. 63. 8; Rev. 14. 5.—[y] Ezek. 34. 28; Mic. 4. 4; 7. 14.

take away—Exterminate. **Them that rejoice in thy pride**—Better, R. V., "thy proudly exulting ones." In Isa. xiii, 3, the phrase is applied to the divinely commissioned hosts, here to the self-righteous in Judah who in pride and arrogance exalt themselves above Jehovah, and glory in their own wisdom and power (Isa. v, 21; compare Amos vi, 13). Only the humble in spirit will be hidden in the day of judgment (ii, 3). **Thou**—The purified remnant. **Shalt no more be haughty**—When the manifestation of the divine power is seen the remnant will recognize its own weakness and will not again exalt itself in proud arrogance. The prophet evidently considers pride the root of all sin, and rightly so, for when a person comes to disregard the authority and rule of Jehovah he is apt to be reckless about his life and conduct (compare Isa. iii, 16; ix, 8). **Because of my holy mountain**—Better, R. V., "in my holy mountain" (see on Joel ii, 1). The temple mount represents here the entire city.

12. The "proudly exulting ones" will be exterminated, but a remnant of a different character will be left. **In the midst of thee**—Jerusalem. **Afflicted and poor**—There is no special virtue in poverty or affliction, and the two English words fail to reproduce the thought of the prophet. *Afflicted* is the opposite of *proud* (verse 11); the proud man boasts in his own strength, the afflicted is one who is bowed down by a recognition of his own weakness; "lowly" would be a more appropriate rendering (Zech. ix, 9; compare Isa. xiv, 32; Matt. xi, 29). A better word for *poor* would be "weak" or "helpless."

12b is more closely connected with 13 than with 12a. The latter part of verse 12 and verse 13 describe the piety and peace of the remnant. The translation would be improved if "the remnant of Israel" were made the subject of "trust," which the Hebrew permits: "And trust in the name of Jehovah shall the remnant; it shall not do iniquity. . . ." **Trust in the name of Jehovah**—The recognition of their weakness and helplessness will keep them humble and lead them to rely fully upon Jehovah. For the importance of faith in religion see on Hab. ii, 4; on *name*, Amos ii, 7; Mic. v, 4. **The remnant of Israel**—Identical with the "afflicted and poor people" of verse 12 (see on Amos v, 15). **Shall not do iniquity**—The converted remnant will do nothing that is not in accord with the spirit of the new covenant between it and Jehovah. In this respect the remnant will resemble Jehovah (see on verse 5). Lying and deceitfulness, condemned so frequently by the prophets, will disappear. How different it will be from the prophet's present! **Deceitful tongue**—Literally, *tongue of deceit;* a tongue that practices deceit. **For**—Does not introduce a causal clause, as if the peace and security were responsible for the transformation in character; 13b rather describes a new aspect of the life of the remnant, and might be introduced by "verily" or "yea" or "but rather" (G.-K., 148d.). **Feed and lie down**—The picture is that of a flock which feeds and rests in perfect security under the watchful eye of the shepherd (Mic. v, 4; vii, 14). **None shall make them afraid**—Undisturbed they will enjoy the presence

14 [z]Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. 15 The LORD hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: [a]the king of Israel, *even* the LORD, [b]*is* in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more. 16 In that day [c]it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not: *and to* Zion, [d]Let not thine hands be [g]slack. 17 The LORD thy God [c]in the midst of thee *is* mighty; he will save, [f]he will rejoice over

[z] Isa. 12. 6; 54. 1; Zech. 2. 10; 9. 9.—[a] John 1. 49.—[b] Verse 5, 17; Ezek. 48. 35; Rev. 7. 15; 21. 3, 4.

[c] Isa. 35. 3, 4.—[d] Heb. 12. 12.—[g] Or, *faint*.—[e] Verse 15.—[f] Deut. 30. 9; Isa. 62. 5; 65. 19; Jer. 32. 41.

and blessing of Jehovah (compare Mic. iv, 4; Isa. xvii, 2).

THE JOY OF THE REDEEMED DAUGHTER OF ZION, 14–20.

These verses, which form the closing section of the Book of Zephaniah, fall naturally into two parts, verses 14–17 and verses 18–20. In the former the daughter of Zion is urged to rejoice mightily, because Jehovah has redeemed her and now rules in the midst of her. In the latter Jehovah promises to the restored community deliverance from all foes, the removal of all reproach, the restoration of the dispersed, and the exaltation of the faithful among the nations of the earth.

14. **Sing, . . . shout, . . . be glad and rejoice**—The accumulation of these verbs indicates that there is abundant cause for rejoicing (Zech. ii, 10; ix, 9). The use of four verbs necessitated the use of several terms denoting Jerusalem, "daughter of Zion," "Israel," "daughter of Jerusalem." The city might be called Israel, because it was the center of the restored and redeemed Israel.

15–17. The reason for the exultation is found in the fullness of the redemption wrought. **Hath taken away thy judgments**—He has made an end of the judgments which have come upon the nation again and again on account of sin (compare Isa. xl, 2). Since these have come to an end, Zion may live in peace and contentment. A change in the vocalization would change "thy judgments" into "thine adversaries," which is favored by the presence of "thine enemy" or "enemies" (LXX.) in the parallel clause. Those who in the past have troubled the chosen people are swept away. **The king of Israel**—In the Messianic age north and south will be reunited (Hos. i, 11), and over the united people Jehovah will rule as king (Obad. 21; Mic. iv, 7), with Jerusalem as his royal residence (see on Joel ii, 27; compare Mic. iv, 7; Isa. ii, 2–4). Marti proposes the omission of "of Israel" and the change of "king" into a verb form, "has become king," so that the entire clause would read, "Jehovah has become king in the midst of thee." **Thou shalt not see evil any more**—R. V., "fear." *Evil* is not moral evil, but calamity or misfortune. Some ancient authorities favor A. V., others R. V.; the difference between the two words "fear" and "see" is so slight in Hebrew that confusion might easily occur. *See* in the sense of *experience* (compare Psa. xc, 15; Prov. xxvii, 12) is the more suitable.

So marked will be the transformation that others will observe it and encourage Jerusalem. R. V. offers a more accurate reproduction of the original: "Fear thou not; O Zion, let not thy hands be slack." **Fear thou not**—Because Jehovah is near, ready to help. **Let not thine hands be slack**—Or, *hang down inactive*, which is a sign of despair and despondency (compare Isa. xiii, 7; Jer. vi, 24).

Verse 17 states why there is no ground for despondency. 17a should be rendered with R. V., "Jehovah thy God is in the midst of thee, a mighty one who will save." For the first part compare verse 15, and see reference there. **A mighty one** (R. V.)—Who has power to render assistance in every need and to save from all difficulties. **He will rejoice over thee with joy; . . .**

thee with joy; [10]he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing. 18 I will gather *them that* [z]*are* sorrowful for the solemn assembly, *who* are of thee, *to whom* [11]the reproach of it *was* a burden. 19 Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee: and I will save her

[10] Heb. *he will be silent.*——[z] Lam. 2. 6.

[11] Heb. *the burden upon it* was *reproach.*

joy over thee with singing—Because uncleanness has been swept away and the community consists only of those who are obedient to his will (compare Isa. lxv, 19; Jer. xxxii, 41). Between the two clauses calling attention to the joy of Jehovah stands a rather obscure clause. **He will rest in his love**—Literally, *he will be silent in his love.* If this is the original text the meaning can only be that Jehovah's love will be too tender and strong for expression. LXX. renders, "he will renew thee," but this does not suit the context. One would expect a verb expressing joyful emotion, and one that would lend itself to the formation of a climax. A verb containing the same consonants as the Hebrew word translated "rest," but in different order, occurs in Psa. xlv, 2 (Eng. verse 1) in the sense of "overflow." This would not be inappropriate here, "he will overflow (with joy) in his love"; it would also produce a climax. Jehovah will joy inwardly, but cannot contain the joy, he will overflow with it, and finally burst into a song of rejoicing.

Verses 18–20 do not contain the song of rejoicing sung by Jehovah, but rather a series of promises made by him to the redeemed community. Verse 18 is very obscure. The translation of the present Hebrew text is uncertain. R. V. differs but slightly from A. V.: "I will gather them that sorrow for the solemn assembly, who were of thee; to whom the burden upon her was a reproach." Both translations make the verse a promise of the restoration of the dispersed, who, far from the holy city, are in deep sorrow because they can no longer gather in the temple, and who have suffered reproach (see on Joel ii, 17) because of the national calamity that has fallen upon them. The thought suggested by the translation in the margin, "They have been sorrowful for the solemn assembly which I took away from thee, for the lifting up of reproach against her," is less appropriate. The meaning of the verb translated "sorrow" is uncertain; it occurs in the same construction in 2 Sam. xx, 13, in the sense of "thrust away," or "remove." The first clause might be translated, therefore, "I will gather them that *are thrust away* from the solemn assembly," which would give acceptable sense. While the translation of the English versions may, perhaps, be had from the present Hebrew text, the latter is very awkward and may have suffered in the course of transmission. The ancient versions differ from it and from one another. LXX. presents a reading which, in part at least, is thought by many to be original. It joins the first two words of verse 18 to verse 17 and reads them "as on a feast day"—the whole clause, "he will joy over thee with singing as on a feast day"; then continues, "I will gather thy crushed ones; woe unto him who utters mockery against her." Verse 17 is not improved by the addition; verse 18 gives good sense, but it cannot be affirmed with certainty that it is original. Instead of the pronoun of the third person we should probably read, with margin, "thee." Marti proposes to read verse 18, "Removed have I (*prophetic* perfect) from thee the reproach; taken away have I from thee the shame." With this he compares verse 11a (see further on verse 19).

19. **At that time**—When the promise made in verse 18 will be fulfilled. **I will undo all that afflict thee**—The verb is literally *do*, sometimes in the sense of "to deal with," either in a good or in an evil sense; here the lat-

that [h]halteth, and gather her that was driven out; and [12]I will get them praise and fame in every land [13]where they have been put to shame. **20** At that time [i]will I bring you *again*, even in the time that I gather you: for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the LORD.

[h] Ezek. 34. 16; Mic. 4. 6, 7.——[12] Heb. *I will set them for a praise.*——[13] Heb. *of their shame.*——[i] Isa. 11. 12; 27. 12; 56. 8; Ezek. 28. 25; 34. 13; 37. 21; Amos 9. 14.

ter, so that A. V. is right in rendering "undo." If the LXX. rendering of verse 18 is correct the first clause of verse 19 is an expansion of 18b; but since "at that time" seems to mark a new beginning, and since the rest of verse 19 and verse 20 speak only of the blessings to be showered upon the *remnant*, it is not impossible that the first clause of verse 19 also speaks of a blessing intended for the afflicted children of Jehovah. An alteration in the vocalization would change "they that afflict thee" into "thy afflicted ones." If this change is made, "to deal with" is used in a favorable sense: "At the time when I will deal with all thy afflicted ones." How he will deal with them is stated in the rest of verse 19 and in verse 20. **Save**—From oppression, suffering, and disease. **Halteth, . . . driven out**—See on Mic. iv, 6 (compare Ezek. xxxiv, 16). **I will get them praise and fame**—Better, R. V., "I will make them a praise and a name." The wonderful things Jehovah will do for his people will so impress the nations by whom they have been oppressed that even they will recognize that "Jehovah hath done great things for them" (Psa. cxxvi, 2); then they will reproach them no more (see on Joel ii, 17), but will praise and glorify them (compare Deut. xxvi, 19, margin; Isa. lxii, 7; Jer. xxxiii, 9). **In every land where they have been put to shame**—R. V., "whose shame hath been in all the earth"; literally, *in the whole earth their shame.* It is difficult to get from this the translation of A. V. or even of R. V. LXX. differs from the Hebrew but does not relieve the difficulty. The omission of "their shame" would simplify matters—"I will make them a praise and a fame in the whole earth" (compare verse 20). Some omit the pronoun after "make" (in Hebrew one letter) and take "their shame" as the object of the verb, "I will make (or, *turn*) into praise and fame in all the earth their shame."

Verse 20 expresses essentially the same thought as verse 19. **Will I bring you again**—R. V., more literally, "bring you in," for which LXX. reads "will do good," which may be original. **Even in the time that I gather you**—R. V. coördinates this clause with the preceding, "and at that time will I gather you." Both translations are based on an emended text. The present Hebrew text cannot be correct; the only question is whether A. V. or R. V. has made the proper correction—probably A. V. Combining the emendation of A. V. with the reading of LXX., 20a may be read, "At that time I will do good to you, even at the time when I shall gather you together." *I will do good* is explained by, "For I will make you a name and a praise among all people (R. V., "all the peoples") of the earth" (see on verse 19), and *when I shall gather you together* by "when I turn back (R. V., "bring back") your captivity" (see on ii, 7, and references there). **Before your eyes**—Within your own lifetime. **Saith Jehovah**—A seal upon the promises. Since they are uttered by Jehovah, they will surely be fulfilled.

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF HAGGAI.

The Prophet.

Of the personal life of the prophet Haggai scarcely anything is known. He is mentioned again only in Ezra v, 1; vi, 14, as encouraging, in conjunction with Zechariah, the rebuilding of the temple. In some of the ancient versions he is named as the author of a number of psalms (LXX., cxxxvii, cxlv—cxlviii; Vulgate, cxi, cxlv; Peshitto, cxxv, cxxvi, cxlv—cxlviii), but little confidence can be placed in these traditions.

The meaning and etymology of the name is uncertain. Some render it *festival* or *festive,* and they infer from this that the prophet was born on a feast day, while others think it to be indicative "of the joyous character of the predictions which he delivered." Others consider the name in its present form an abbreviation, and they give its original meaning as *feast of Jehovah,* or *Jehovah hath girded;* however, the derivation and significance of the name are still doubtful. It is worthy of note that it has been found on a tablet from the fifth century B. C. unearthed at Nippur.

Haggai appears upon the scene suddenly about 520 B. C. and disappears just as suddenly. Nothing is known of his life before or after his preaching. Chiefly on the basis of ii, 3, it has been suggested that he was born in Judah before the catastrophe of 586, and that he was one of a small company that had seen the former temple in its glory. If so, he must have been an old man when he prophesied, and this supposition agrees with the brevity of his public activity; a short time after 520 Zechariah appears as the leading prophet in Jerusalem (Zech. vii, 1ff.).

Later tradition has it that he came from Babylon when a young man, that he prophesied concerning the return, saw

the temple built, died in Jerusalem, and was buried near the priests. Hesychius of Jerusalem expands this tradition and says that he was born in Babylon of the tribe of Levi, and that the latter fact accounts for his being buried with the priests.

Little value can be ascribed to these extra-biblical traditions; hence we must be content with the few hints given by the Book of Haggai itself, and the only information that we get there is that he delivered four prophecies in the second year of Darius, king of Persia, and that his supreme interest lay in the rebuilding of the temple of Jehovah.

The Time of the Prophet.

1. *Date.*—The four prophecies of Haggai were uttered in the second year of Darius Hystaspis, king of Persia, that is, in 520 B. C. During that year he spoke on four occasions, on the first day of the sixth month (i, 1), on the twenty-first day of the seventh month (ii, 1), and on the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month (ii, 10, 20).

2. *Historical Situation.*—In considering the historical situation out of which grew the utterances of Haggai and Zechariah it may be well to begin with the first return from exile. Babylon fell into the hands of Cyrus in 538; soon after he gave permission to the Jews to return to their former homes, and in the spring of 537 a large company, between forty and fifty thousand, started on the homeward journey. On reaching Jerusalem they immediately set up the altar of burnt offerings (Ezra iii, 2ff.; compare Hag. ii, 14), and according to Ezra iii, 8-13, they laid, in the second year, the foundation of the temple.

Ezra iii, 8-13, is not a contemporaneous document; on the other hand, the utterances of Haggai and Zechariah and Ezra v are thought to come from a period near the occurrence of the events recorded there. These last-mentioned writings seem to place the laying of the foundation of the temple in the year 520; they say nothing, directly or indirectly, about an

earlier undertaking of the same sort. As a result many scholars hold that the statements in Ezra iii, 8-13, concerning the laying of the temple foundations are not historical (see further below). But this is not a necessary conclusion; the silence of the two prophets may be purely accidental. During the sixteen years of inactivity the foundation must have gone to ruin, so that in 520 there was nothing left to build upon. Why should the prophets refer to the former undertaking, which ended in failure, and thus remind the people of the obstacles which compelled them to desist from the work? There certainly is nothing either in Haggai or Zechariah to disprove the laying of the foundation at the earlier date.

But if the foundation was laid in 536 the cessation of the work may easily be accounted for: (1) During their stay in Babylon the exiles had learned to do without the temple; only the religious zealots, always in the minority, would miss it. (2) The opposition of the Samaritans and other surrounding tribes would furnish a ready excuse to the indifferent Jews. (3) The nonfulfillment of the earlier prophecies concerning the glories of the restored community would develop religious indifference and skepticism. (4) Limited resources and poverty resulting from the failure of the crops (i, 6) and from the devastation wrought by the Persian armies on their way to Egypt could and would be urged. It is not difficult, then, to see how building operations begun in 536 might come to a complete standstill.

While the postexilic community was struggling against great odds to establish itself in and near Jerusalem, important events were taking place in the outside world. Cyrus died in 529, leaving to his son Cambyses an empire extending from Lydia in the west to India in the east. Cambyses, who reigned from 529 to 521, added Egypt to his possessions. He was followed by a usurper, Gaumata, who pretended to be Smerdis, the son of Cyrus, but after a reign of seven months he was assassinated, and Darius Hystaspis was raised to the

throne. He found the empire in a state of extreme restlessness; rebellions broke out everywhere; province after province revolted; in Babylon two pretenders attempted, in rapid succession, to throw off the Persian rule. The whole empire was shaken from one end to the other.

Haggai and Zechariah, like their predecessors in the prophetic office, read the signs of the times. To them the widespread rebellions were an indication that the doom of the Persian empire was at hand (Hag. ii, 6, 7, 22), and that the seventy years (Jer. xxv, 11) were drawing to a close; they were also convinced that, with the hostile world power removed, the way was clear for the establishment of the kingdom of God. But in the thought of the two prophets the establishment of the Messianic kingdom was closely connected with the rebuilding of the temple and the exaltation of a descendant of David. Hence the earnest exhortations to resume building operations and the promises to Zerubbabel, the chosen servant of Jehovah.

At least a brief reference must be made to an entirely different view of the progress of events during the latter part of the sixth century B. C.—a view first presented with great skill by Koster, and accepted by Cheyne, at least in part, by H. P. Smith, and others. These scholars believe that the compiler of Ezra—Nehemiah misunderstood the course of history in two important points: 1. The return from exile and the building of the temple; 2. The date of Ezra's mission. The latter is thought to have taken place—if ever—either in connection with the second visit of Nehemiah, about 432, or subsequent to it, perhaps as late as the beginning of the fourth century; and it is denied that in 537 a general return from Babylon occurred, or that the temple was rebuilt by returned exiles. Persons left behind in 586, or their descendants, are thought to be the temple builders exhorted by Haggai and Zechariah. Cheyne would admit that a few exiles did return in 537, but he denies that they had any appreciable influence in the days of the two prophets.

The chief argument in favor of this view is the silence of Haggai and Zechariah concerning a return. This leaves as the only source of information the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, compiled about 350 B. C. by the compiler of the Books of Chronicles. But, the argument continues, a comparison of Chronicles with Kings reveals the unreliability of the former, and this involves the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, which come from the same author. Koster then subjects Ezra—Nehemiah to a minute critical analysis and reaches the conclusion that the sections which contain the references to the return of 537 are so late that their testimony cannot stand against the silence of the two prophets who prophesied so soon after the alleged date of the return.

Limited space does not permit a lengthy discussion of the subject; it may be sufficient to say here that the arguments are by no means conclusive, and that they have failed to convince the great majority of Old Testament scholars. In the words of G. A. Smith, "We must hold that the attempt to discredit the tradition of an important return of exiles under Cyrus has not been successful; that such a return remains the more probable solution of an obscure and difficult problem; and that therefore the Jews who with Zerubbabel and Joshua are represented in Haggai and Zechariah as building the temple in the second year of Darius, 520, had come up from Babylon about 537."

Little can be gathered either from Haggai or from Zechariah concerning religious and moral conditions in Jerusalem in 520 B. C. The one outstanding feature seems to be religious indifference, due to the causes already mentioned, especially to disappointment. The great prophet of the exile had pictured the future in the brightest colors, and thus had raised the hopes and expectations of the exiles to the highest pitch; but when the years passed without bringing a realization of these hopes, indifference and skepticism settled upon them. Why serve Jehovah, who failed to fulfill the promises made by his prophets? For this reason the people looked after their

own comforts, while they neglected the interests of the sanctuary (i, 9), excusing themselves by saying that the time for the building of the temple had not yet arrived (i, 2). On the other hand, they did bring sacrifices and offerings (ii, 14), and the ritual law was observed in other respects (ii, 11-13). Zech. vii, viii show also that feasts and fasts were kept (compare Hag. i, 1). Otherwise we are left in the dark concerning conditions in Judah at this time, for the abuses condemned so severely by Ezra, Nehemiah, and Malachi seem to have developed subsequently to Haggai and Zechariah (see introduction to Malachi).

The Book of the Prophet.

1. *Contents.*—The attempts of a few recent writers, such as Boehme and André, to prove that ii, 10-19, or ii, 20-23, come from a writer other than the author of the rest of the book, cannot be considered successful; indeed, there seems no reason for questioning the integrity of the book. On the other hand, it is quite probable that we have in the two chapters only summaries of Haggai's utterances, put in their present form either by Haggai himself or by a contemporary who desired to give an account of the prophet's efforts toward bringing about the rebuilding of the temple. The latter alternative accounts more naturally for the presence of the historical section, as well as for the arrangement of the entire book.

The book contains four separate utterances, i, 1-11; ii, 1-9; ii, 10-19; ii, 20-23, each one dealing more or less directly with the rebuilding of the temple, and an historical section (i, 12-15), which describes the effects of the first discourse.

The first address (i, 1-11) was delivered on the first day of the sixth month of the second year of Darius, king of Persia, and was intended primarily for Zerubbabel and Joshua, the civil and ecclesiastical heads of the community (i, 1). The prophet rebukes the religious indifference of the people, which has caused them to erect comfortable houses for them-

selves, while they have neglected the house of their God (2-4). He urges them to stop and consider the disappointments and calamities of the past, which have been divine visitations for their religious apathy. If they would find relief they must restore speedily the dwelling place of Jehovah (5-11).

The preaching of Haggai stirred the consciences of leaders and people, so that "they feared before Jehovah" (12). When the prophet saw the revival of interest he changed his message of rebuke to one of encouragement, promising that Jehovah would be with them (13). Whereupon, on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month, the people began to make preparation for the rebuilding of the house of Jehovah (14,15).

The second address (ii, 1-9), a message of encouragement for the builders, was delivered on the twenty-first day of the seventh month. When the first enthusiasm had died down the people became aware of the difficulties confronting them. Their numbers were small, the building material was costly and had to be brought from a distance, their resources were meager, and, to make matters worse, the surrounding communities did all in their power to prevent the completion of the work. Under these circumstances the religious fervor of some grew cold, and all were in danger of losing heart. To the discouraged builders Haggai addresses himself, "Be strong, . . . for I am with you, saith Jehovah of hosts" (ii, 1-4). The present outlook may be dark, but there is no ground for discouragement, for the covenant made at the time of the Exodus is still in force, and Jehovah will be with his people. In the end the new temple, enriched by the wealth of the nations, that are about to be shaken violently, shall be more glorious than that of Solomon (5-9).

The third utterance (ii, 10-19) also is a message of hope, spoken on the day on which the foundation of the temple was laid, three months after the first steps toward the rebuilding had been taken. New questions had arisen among the people. Were they really as bad as Haggai had tried to make out in his first discourse? And if not, how much truth was there in

his statements that their calamities were due to neglect of the temple, and in his promise that, if they would build the temple, the divine blessings would be restored? These doubts and questionings the prophet seeks to silence by propounding to the priests certain questions concerning the relative power of infection possessed by clean and unclean things. The priests reply that the unclean is more contagious than the clean (10-13). This answer the prophet applies to the case in hand. True, they offer gifts, but they are insufficient to overcome the unclean in their lives, especially the indifference toward the temple; on the contrary, their uncleanness makes even their sacrifices an abomination in the sight of Jehovah (14). Once more he discusses the relation between their calamities and their neglectfulness, and shows that the former are the direct result of the latter; then he closes with the promise that henceforth the divine favor will rest upon them (15-19).

The fourth utterance (ii, 20-23) is Messianic in character. It was delivered on the same day as the preceding, and promises the exaltation of Zerubbabel, the prince of David's house. In the second discourse the prophet announced the shaking of the nations of the earth (ii, 6, 7); this announcement he repeats, and he promises that the shaking will pave the way for the establishment of the kingdom of God under the rule of the Messianic king, Zerubbabel, the servant and chosen one of Jehovah (20-23).

2. *Outline.*—

I. Message of rebuke for religious indifference.....Chap. i, 1-11
   1. The people's selfishness.....i, 1-4
   2. The divine judgment for religious apathy—Exhortation to resume building operations.....i, 5-11

II. The result of the rebuke—The building of the temple .....i, 12-15
   1. The people's fear.....i, 12
   2. Promise of divine coöperation.....i, 13
   3. Beginning of the work.....i, 14, 15

III. The glory of the new temple.....ii, 1-9
1. Jehovah's presence with the builders.....ii, 1-4
2. The temple's future glory.....ii, 5-9
IV. The completion of the temple a guarantee of new blessings .....ii, 10-19
1. The unclean more contagious than the clean.....ii, 10-13
2. The people's offerings cannot atone for their neglectfulness.....ii, 14
3. Indifference—calamity; Zeal—prosperity.....ii, 15-19
V. The exaltation of Zerubbabel.....ii, 20-23
1. The overthrow of the nations.....ii, 20-22
2. The establishment of the kingdom of God and the exaltation of Zerubbabel.....ii, 23

3. *Teaching.*—Haggai was, in a very real sense, a man of one idea. From beginning to end he urged, with simple words of warning, promise, and exhortation, without conventional eloquence or poetic flights of the imagination, the speedy restoration of the dwelling place of Jehovah; and the success which attended his exhortations sufficiently justifies the use of what has been called a "meager and starved" style. "One does not expect it otherwise, when hungry men speak to each other of their duty."

Of the truths emphasized by the prophet the following deserve special notice: (1) The unique place assigned to the temple in the religious life of the Jews. The preëxilic prophets also considered the temple the dwelling place of Jehovah, but their teaching dwelt almost exclusively upon weightier spiritual and ethical matters. With Haggai the rebuilding of the temple is of primary importance; it does not follow, however, that his religious capacity was inferior to theirs. The change in emphasis was due rather to a change in conditions. The Hebrew prophets were raised up primarily to meet the problems of their own day and generation. Now conditions in Jerusalem after the exile were far different from those in the eighth century B. C.; as a prophet of Jehovah Haggai must adapt himself and his message to the changed conditions; he must interpret religion "in accordance with the

needs of a new age." The supreme need of the hour was a visible, earthly temple. True, some prophets speak of a time when a house made with hands will be needed no longer (Isa. lxvi, 1, 2), but the Jews of the latter part of the sixth century were not yet prepared to grasp this lofty conception of the presence of Jehovah. As the ark in the ages gone by, so now the temple was the outward symbol of the presence of Jehovah, and if the Jews were to continue the worship of Jehovah they still needed a material temple. Besides, with the central national government gone, a new bond was needed to draw together the different elements in the community itself as well as the exiles scattered among the nations. In a religious community what could serve this purpose better than a common center of worship, a place to which might turn the hearts of the faithful Jews, even from the uttermost parts of the earth, assured that there they could meet their God? Is it, then, too much to say that, humanly speaking, the very existence of the Jewish religion was dependent upon the rebuilding of the temple? But if this is true, Haggai, by pleading so persistently for the restoration of the temple, did a service of incalculable moment. Surely he cannot be held responsible for the illegitimate exaggeration of his teaching by subsequent generations. (2) Haggai calls attention to the covenant relation between Jehovah and Israel, and to the former's continued care for the latter (ii, 5); this covenant he declares will continue forever (i, 13; ii, 4). (3) He agrees with the preëxilic prophets in declaring that sacrifice is not the essential thing in the sight of God (ii, 14). (4) He shares the older prophets' ideas concerning calamity and prosperity. The former he considers an expression of the divine wrath, a punishment for sin; the latter an expression of the divine favor, a reward for piety (i, 6-11; ii, 15-19). (5) He expects a great world judgment which will result in the overthrow of the nations; this overthrow to clear the way for the establishment of the kingdom of God upon the earth (ii, 6, 7; ii, 21, 22). (6) His Messianic hope centers around an off-

spring of the dynasty of David, Zerubbabel, who is the servant of Jehovah, his chosen one, the object of his affection (ii, 23); he also thinks of Jehovah as ruling forever in the temple (ii, 9). (7) Of great significance is the universalism of Haggai. In ii, 7, he expresses the hope that the nations of the earth, overawed by Jehovah's majesty and power, will recognize his supremacy and will bring their precious things as offerings to him.

The presentation of these truths is highly colored by the prophet's *one idea.* He alludes to the covenant only to encourage the people to greater zeal in their building operations; sacrifice he mentions to show that it cannot atone for their neglect of the temple. Their calamity or prosperity is determined by their attitude toward the restoration of the house of God; the overthrow and conversion of the nations will result in the enriching of the temple; the establishment of the kingdom of God and the exaltation of Zerubbabel will be the supreme manifestations of the divine favor, but they will be theirs only on the condition that they build speedily a dwelling place for Jehovah.

HAGGAI.

CHAPTER I.

IN [a]the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the LORD [1]by Haggai the prophet unto [b]Zerubbabel the son

[a] Ezra 4. 24; 5. 1; Zech. 1. 1.——[1] Heb. *by the hand of Haggai.*

[b] 1 Chron. 3. 17, 19; Ezra 3. 2; Matt. 1. 12; Luke 3. 27.

CHAPTER I.

Message of Rebuke for Religious Indifference, 1–11.

The Book of Haggai contains four separate prophetic utterances (i, 1–11; ii, 1–9; ii, 10–19; ii, 20–23); to the first is added an historical section (i, 12–15), setting forth the effect of this utterance upon the hearers.

The first discourse contains a rebuke of religious indifference and an exhortation to rebuild the temple. Verse 1 gives the time when the discourse was delivered and the names of the persons to whom it was addressed; verses 2–11 reproduce the discourse. The prophet rebukes the religious indifference that has permitted the people to erect comfortable houses for themselves, while the temple remained in ruins (2–4); he calls attention to the disappointments, distress, and suffering which they were experiencing as a result of drought, and tells them that these afflictions have come to them as divine judgments for their religious apathy. If they would find relief they must speedily restore the dwelling place of Jehovah (5–11).

Verse 1 is an integral part of the report of Haggai's first address (compare Zech. i, 1). **The second year of Darius**—Darius Hystaspis reigned from 521 to 486 B. C.; his second year, therefore, is 520. **The king**—It was not necessary to add "of Persia," for the king of Persia was the only prominent ruler with whom the Jews were acquainted during the early part of the postexilic period, and until the fall of the Persian empire he was *the* king, because he was their king (compare Ezra v, 4, 24). **The sixth month**—Called *Elul;* it corresponds to the latter part of August and the first part of September (compare Neh. vi, 15). **The first day**—Which was the new moon festival, when the people gathered for worship—a splendid opportunity for reaching a large number; besides, on such a day the lack of a house of worship would be felt most keenly. Chronological notes of this character are found only in postexilic writings; the greater exactness is undoubtedly due to Babylonian influence. **By Haggai**—Literally, *by the hand of Haggai* (compare verse 13; see on Mic. v, 12). Haggai was the instrument used by Jehovah to make known his will. On the person of the prophet see Introduction, p. 547. The message was addressed especially, though not exclusively (compare verses 4ff.), to the civil and ecclesiastical heads of the community. **Zerubbabel . . . , governor of Judah**—Mentioned also by Zechariah as the civil ruler. How he came to be governor we do not know. He is named among the first exiles who returned (Ezra ii, 2), but the governor appointed by Cyrus is called Sheshbazzar (Ezra i, 8; v, 14). Some have thought that the two names belong to one and the same person, but this is exceedingly doubtful. It is more probable that Zerubbabel was the successor of Sheshbaz-

of Shealtiel, [2]governor of Judah, and to [c]Joshua the son of [d]Josedech, the high priest, saying, 2 Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the LORD'S house should be built. 3 Then came the word of the LORD [e]by Haggai the prophet, saying, 4 [f]*Is* it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house *lie* waste? 5 Now therefore thus saith the LORD

[2] Or, *captain*.—[c] Ezra 3. 2; 5. 2.—[d] 1 Chron. 6. 15.

[e] Ezra 5. 1.—[f] 2 Sam. 7. 2; Psa. 132. 3, etc.

zar as governor of Judah. **Son of Shealtiel**—See Ezra iii, 2; v, 2; compare 1 Chron. iii, 19. **Joshua . . . , the high priest**—Zechariah also names Joshua as the head of the priesthood (see especially iii, 1ff.). **The son of Josedech**—R. V., "Jehozadak," which is a fuller form of the same name; it means *Jehovah is righteous* (compare Zech. vi, 11; Ezra iii, 2).

Verses 2ff. contain the words of the prophet. **Thus speaketh Jehovah of hosts**—The verb is the same as that rendered "saith" in the rest of the book. In Haggai as in Zechariah the affirmation that the prophet is the spokesman of Jehovah occurs very frequently (see on Zech. i, 3). For *Jehovah of hosts* see on Hos. xii, 5. **This people**—The people gathered at the new moon celebration. The phrase may be used in a contemptuous sense (ii, 14), though it does not necessarily imply reproach (compare Isa. viii, 11, 12). **The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built**—R. V., "It is not the time for us to come, the time for Jehovah's house to be built." The ancient versions omit the first "time," and, since the construction of the present Hebrew text is very awkward, we may be justified in doing the same, so that the clause will read, "The time is not (yet) come for the building of Jehovah's house" (see margin R. V.). The people may have misunderstood the *seventy years* of Jeremiah (xxv, 11, 12; xxix, 10). If they reckoned from the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 the time would not be accomplished until four years after the delivery of this prophecy. For other causes that may have been responsible for the delay see Introduction, p. 549. However, Haggai considers the delay inexcusable. On the view that previous to the preaching of Haggai no steps had been taken toward the rebuilding of the temple see Introduction, pp. 550f.; compare H. P. Smith, *Old Testament History*, pp. 344ff.

In verses 4ff. the prophet, after affirming once more that he is the spokesman of Jehovah, points out the unfairness of the people's neglect. They have left Jehovah without a dwelling place, while they themselves live in costly and magnificently decorated homes. Surely they cannot urge poverty or lack of resources as an excuse. **Is it time**—R. V., "Is it *a* time"; a *proper* or *fit* time. **For you, O ye**—R. V., "for you yourselves." Their own interests should be of less consequence than the interests of their God. **Cieled houses**—Houses whose walls and ceilings were covered or inlaid with costly woodwork. Such decorations were exceedingly expensive (compare 1 Kings vi, 9; Jer. xxii, 14), and yet these people, who, judging from the words of the prophet, urged poverty as an excuse for the neglect of the temple, used them extensively. **And this house lie waste**—A circumstantial clause, which should be rendered with R. V., "while this house lieth waste."

5, 6. If at present they are experiencing misfortune, if the results of their labors are disappointing, if their crops do not prosper, all these calamities are a judgment from Jehovah for their indifference and neglectfulness (compare verse 9). For the philosophy underlying this argument see on Amos iii, 6, and at the close of comments on Amos iv, 11.

of hosts; [3] [g]Consider your ways. 6 Ye have [h]sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and [i]he that earneth wages earneth wages *to put it* into a bag [4]with holes.

7 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. 8 Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD. 9 [k]Ye looked for much, and, lo, *it came* to little; and when ye brought *it* home, [l]I did [5]blow upon it. Why? saith the LORD of hosts. Because of mine house that *is* waste, and ye run every man unto his own house. 10 Therefore [m]the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is

[3] Heb. *Set your heart on your ways.* —[g] Verse 7; Lam. 3. 40.—[h] Deut. 28. 38; Hos. 4. 10; Mic. 6. 14, 15; chap. 2. 16.

[i] Zech. 8. 10.—[4] Heb. *pierced through.* —[k] Chap. 2. 16.—[l] Chap. 2. 17.—[5] Or, *blow it away.*—[m] Lev. 26. 19; Deut. 28. 23; 1 Kings 8. 35.

Consider your ways—Literally, *set your hearts on your ways.* A favorite phrase with Haggai (compare verse 7; ii, 15, 18). Their *ways* are their conduct, but, as verse 6 indicates, the consequences of the conduct are to be included in their considerations. Jerome explains *your ways* as equivalent to "what you have done and what you have suffered." Their experiences have been startling enough to cause them to stop and think. A curse seemed to rest upon all their possessions and undertakings. **Bring in**—Harvest. Harvests had turned out badly; abundant sowing had produced sparingly (compare Isa. v, 8–10). For how many years this continued we do not know. The same curse was seen everywhere. What they ate and drank did not satisfy their hunger and thirst, their clothes failed to warm them, and the wages of the day laborer were used up as rapidly as if they had been placed in a bag full of holes.

Verse 7 urges the people again to stop and consider. It is possible, however, that "consider your ways" is an erroneous repetition from verse 5, and that verse 6 should be followed immediately by the direct appeal to build the temple (verse 8), introduced by the common formula, "Thus saith Jehovah of hosts." **Go up to the mountain**—To gather wood for building material. The article is used generically: any mountain upon which building material could be found, not necessarily Mount Lebanon. At the time of Haggai the hills around Jerusalem may have been covered with woods. **Bring wood**—The term may include building material of every sort. Wood would be the most important, since stones from the ruins of the first temple might be used in the foundation of the new. After gathering the material they were to proceed with the building operations. **I will take pleasure in it**—Which he will prove by taking his abode there (compare Psa. cxxxii, 13, 14). **I will be glorified**—Better, *I will glorify myself.* The completion of the temple will mark the dawn of the Messianic age, when Jehovah will glorify himself by pouring his blessing upon his people in abundant measure.

Verses 9, 10 enforce the appeal of verse 8 by calling attention once more to the present calamity and by emphasizing the thought that it is the direct result of their neglectfulness. They were disappointed in their expectations of a rich harvest, and the little they did reap vanished without doing any good. **I did blow upon it**—So that it vanished. Misfortune came not by chance; Jehovah sent it because they neglected his house while living in luxury in their own (compare verse 4). The description of the judgment is continued in verses 10, 11. **Over you**—Better, R. V., "for your sake." On account of your transgressions. **Dew**—Jehovah withheld the dew, which is of great importance in Palestine (see on Hos. xiv, 5), and as a result of this and of the drought

stayed *from* her fruit. **11** And I [n]called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon *that* which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and [o]upon all the labor of the hands. **12** [p]Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the LORD their God had sent him, and the people did fear before the LORD. **13** Then spake Haggai the LORD'S messenger in the LORD'S

[n] 1 Kings 17.1; 2 Kings 8. 1.

[o] Chap. 2. 17.—[p] Ezra 5. 2.

mentioned in verse 11, the land remained barren. The tenses should be changed in English so as to agree with those of 9a and 11. Some of the expressions in the original are peculiar, and several minor emendations have been proposed, but even with these the thought remains the same. **I called for a drought**—As a means of judgment (see on Amos iv, 7). "Drought," Heb. *ḥōrebh*, corresponds to "lieth waste," Heb. *ḥārēbh* (verses 4, 9). Because they left his house *ḥārēbh* he punished them with *ḥōrebh*, the judgment being according to the *lex talionis*. **Upon the mountains**—So that the forests suffered. **Corn, . . . new wine, . . . oil**—The chief products of Palestine (see on Joel i, 10). **That which the ground bringeth forth**—All products of the soil not previously mentioned. The terrible drought brought intense suffering to man and beast (see on Joel i, 18). **All the labor of the hands**—The drought made of no effect all the labor expended in the cultivation of the soil (compare Psa. cxxviii, 2).

THE RESULT OF THE REBUKE—THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE, 12–15.

The preaching of Haggai aroused the consciences of leaders and people, so that they "feared Jehovah" (12). When he saw indications of a revival of interest he changed his message of rebuke into one of encouragement and promise (13); whereupon, on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month, they began building operations (14, 15).

12. **Then**—As a result of the message contained in i, 2–11. How soon the effect manifested itself is not stated—perhaps immediately, perhaps not until after the people had meditated upon it. At any rate, within little more than three weeks actual operations commenced. The names mentioned are those found in verse 1 (see there). **The remnant of the people**—Around a remnant of the people, saved from the national calamity, centered the hopes of the preexilic prophets (see on Amos v, 15). The postexilic community was, in a sense, this remnant, and to it the term is applied here. But this remnant proved faithless, and it was soon found that the hope of the future lay with a remnant within the remnant. **Obeyed**—They did not set to work immediately, but they laid to heart the message, and the prophet saw indications of their readiness to obey. **As**—Equivalent to *in keeping with the fact that*. Several of the ancient versions add in this clause "to them." The people obeyed the words of Haggai, as was in keeping with the fact that Jehovah their God had sent him unto them. **Did fear**—Not in the sense in which the verb is used so frequently in the Old Testament (see on Zeph. iii, 7), but "they were afraid." The prophet had pointed out to them the great power of Jehovah, and they wondered what other terrible calamities he might send.

13. The "fear" can hardly be considered an evidence of a "penitential state of mind"; nevertheless the prophet saw that the indifference had been shaken and that a message of encouragement might prove effective. **Messenger**—The prophet is called a messenger of Jehovah, because he is

message unto the people, saying, [q]I *am* with you, saith the LORD. **14** And [r]the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, [s]governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; [t]and they came and did work in the house of the LORD of hosts, their God, **15** In the four and twentieth day of the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king.

[q] Matt. 28. 20; Rom. 8. 31.—[r] 2 Chron. 36. 22; Ezra 1. 1.

CHAPTER II.

IN the seventh *month*, in the one and twentieth *day* of the month, came the word of the LORD [1]by the prophet Haggai, saying, **2** Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high

[s] Chap. 2. 21.—[t] Ezra 5. 2, 8.—[1] Heb. *by the hand of.*

sent by him (12) to deliver his message. **In Jehovah's message**—The root of this noun is the same as that of "messenger," and the phrase seems to mean "in the capacity of a messenger of Jehovah," that is, not of his own accord. **I am with you**—The task may seem difficult, but with Jehovah's coöperation assured they need not fear (compare ii, 4; see on Zech. iv, 6, 7). Some commentators question the originality of verse 13, because (1) it interrupts the thought, verse 14 being the natural continuation of verse 12; (2) Haggai is not called a prophet, as elsewhere, but a messenger, which is thought to point to diversity of authorship.

14, 15. The promise that Jehovah would coöperate filled the people with enthusiasm. **Stirred up the spirit**—He imparted a spirit of willingness and determination (see on Joel ii, 28), and enthusiastically they set to work on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month, just twenty-three days after Haggai had first rebuked their indifference (compare Ezra v, 1, 2). There is insufficient reason for doubting the originality of verse 15.

CHAPTER II.

THE GLORY OF THE NEW TEMPLE, 1–9.

These verses contain the second address of Haggai, a message of encouragement to the builders. The prophet promises, in the name of Jehovah, that the new temple, enriched by the wealth of the Gentiles and blessed with peace, shall be more glorious than that of Solomon.

Verse 1 gives the date of the utterance. **Seventh month**—Named *Tishri*, covering the latter part of September and first part of October. **The one and twentieth day**—Less than a month after the beginning of the work. We must assume, and the assumption finds support in the contents of the message, that during the interval, when the first enthusiasm had died down, people began to think more soberly about the obstacles to be encountered. Their numbers were small, the building material was costly, some of it had to be brought from a distance, there were no resources such as Solomon could draw upon, and no allies to assist in the work; instead, they had to suffer much from their neighbors. Under these discouraging conditions the fervor of some grew cold, and some malcontents, who perhaps had held aloof from the beginning, found ready listeners. What was the use of it all? They could never expect to equal the temple of Solomon. Why not quit work? Haggai saw that the enterprise was threatened with complete failure unless he could revive the former courage and enthusiasm. This he sought to do by bringing to the discouraged builders a new message of hope and inspiration. Verse 2 is similar to i, 1, 12 (see there).

3. The prophet does not deny that there is a marked contrast between the former temple and the one on which they are now laboring. **This house**—The temple of Jehovah. The Jews did not think of the first, second, and third temples as separate build-

priest, and to the residue of the people, saying, 3 [a]Who *is* left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? [b]*is it* not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing? 4 Yet now [c]be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the LORD; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the LORD, and work: for I *am* with you, saith the LORD of hosts: 5 [d]*According to* the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so [e]my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not.

[a] Ezra 3. 12.—[b] Zech. 4. 10.—[c] Zech. 8. 9.

[d] Exod. 29. 45, 46.—[e] Neh. 9. 20; Isa. 63.11.

ings; they were all one and the same temple of Jehovah, only in different forms. Here the prophet has in mind Solomon's temple. **Who is left . . . that saw**—Probably only very few, for about sixty-six years had elapsed since the destruction of Solomon's temple in 586. **First glory**—R. V., "former glory" (compare 1 Kings v, 7). **How do ye see it now?**—In what condition? Certainly it was not yet completed, but they knew the resources at their command, and were fully aware that in style of building and magnificence of equipment they could not possibly equal the former splendor (compare Zech. iv, 10). **Is it not . . . as nothing?**—For the grammatical construction of the Hebrew see G.-K., 161c. R. V. reproduces it in smoother English: "is it not in your eyes as nothing?"

4. The prophet does not deny the justice of the estimate, but he does deny that the prospective inferiority of the temple is a valid ground for discouragement, or a sufficient reason for discontinuing the building operations. **Yet now**—Nevertheless; in spite of the great difference. **Be strong**—Do not permit appearances to discourage you, but remain confident as to the ultimate success. These words are addressed to all the people (compare Zech. iv, 6–10). **Work**—Only if they do their share can God render assistance (compare 1 Chron. xxviii, 20). There is no need for discouragement, because Jehovah, the God of hosts (see on Hos. xii, 5), is with them (i, 13). "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. viii, 31.)

The translation of 5a is uncertain. Both English translations supply "according to," but A. V. connects 5a with 5b, "According to the word . . . , so my spirit remaineth," while R. V. connects it with 4b, "I am with you, . . . according to the word." The chief difficulty lies in "the word," which in Hebrew stands in the accusative, but whose syntactical relation cannot be determined very easily. Some supply the verb *remember*, hence margin R. V., "Remember the word," but this is arbitrary. The grammatical difficulty cannot be solved, and we must be satisfied with saying that, if the text is correct, the promise of Jehovah to coöperate with the people is somehow brought in connection with a covenant promise made at the time of the Exodus (compare, for example, Exod. vi, 7; xix, 4–6). The difficulty vanishes if, following LXX., we omit 5a; LXX. reads 5b, "And my spirit shall remain in the midst of you, fear not." This makes a natural continuation of verse 4. For the promise see on Zech. iv, 6; for *my spirit*, on Joel ii, 28, and A. B. Davidson, *The Theology of the Old Testament*, pp. 115–129, from which may be quoted a few sentences: "The Spirit of Jehovah is Jehovah himself—the source of life of all kinds, of the quickening of the mind in thought, in morals, in religion, particularly the last. . . . The Spirit of God *ab intra* is God active, showing life and power, of all kinds similar to those exhibited by the spirit of man in man; the Spirit of God *ab extra* is God in efficient operation, whether in the cosmos or as giving life, reinforcing life, exerting efficiency in any sphere, whether physical, intellectual, or spiritual; the tendency toward limiting the Spirit of God to the ethical

6 For thus saith the LORD of hosts; [f]Yet once, it *is* a little while, and [g]I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry *land;* 7 And I will shake all nations, [h]and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts. 8 The silver *is* mine, and the gold *is* mine, saith the LORD of hosts. 9

[f] Verse 21; Heb. 12. 26.—[g] Joel 3. 16.

[h] Gen. 49. 10; Mal. 3. 1.

and spiritual spheres is due to the tendency to regard God mainly on those sides of his being." The translation of R. V. "abode" is wrong, for the words contain a promise for the future. **Fear ye not**—Though the present seems dark and unpromising.

Verses 6–9 expand the promise of verses 4, 5. Jehovah will manifest his presence and power by a great shaking of nature and of the nations of the earth (6, 7a); as a result the nations will recognize his supremacy and bring costly presents to his temple (7b, 8). Then the magnificence of the new temple will surpass that of the old, and Jehovah will add to its splendor by making it his dwelling place, from which he will dispense permanent peace and prosperity to the community (9). Similar thoughts are expressed in the first three visions of Zechariah (i, 7–ii, 13).

6–8. **Yet once, it is a little while**—The Hebrew is peculiar, and various interpretations have been suggested. If the text is correct, which is doubted by some, the meaning seems to be that once more Jehovah will shake heaven and earth (for former shakings compare Exod. xix, 16–18; Judg. v, 4, 5; Mic. i, 3, 4; Nah. i, 2–6); and that this new (and final) shaking will take place in a short time. **Shake**—The convulsions spoken of here are those connected by other prophets with the *day of Jehovah*, which is undoubtedly the crisis in the mind of Haggai. All nature is to be convulsed by the terrible manifestation of Jehovah (see on Joel ii, 10, 11, 30, 31). **All nations**—The prophet expects political upheavals in which the nations hostile to the remnant will be overthrown, and this overthrow will pave the way for the establishment of the kingdom of God in all its glory. Political disturbances had begun throughout the Persian empire before 520, and both Haggai and Zechariah expected that these troubles would spread until the empire would go to pieces. With the oppressor gone, they expected the glories of the Messianic age to be ushered in (see on Zech. i, 11, and Introduction, p. 550). In this respect the utterances of these postexilic prophets resemble those of the prophets before the exile, who expected the Messianic era to begin immediately after the overthrow of Assyria (for example, Isa. x, 32–xi, 5; Mic. iv, 11–v, 4; Nah. i, 15–ii, 2). **The desire of all nations shall come**—R. V., "the precious things of all nations shall come." The latter is a correct reproduction of the sense. *Desire* is equivalent to *object of desire* or *that which is desired*, which is not the Messiah, nor the choice and noble spirits among the nations, but their valuable possessions (LXX. has plural), including among other things the silver and gold mentioned in verse 8. These precious things will be brought into the temple (compare Isa. lx, 5) by those among the nations who survive the shaking and who become convinced through the terrible manifestation of Jehovah that he alone is God (compare Zech. xiv, 16). **With glory**—Not the glory of the divine presence or glory due to heavenly gifts, but glory or splendor due to the bringing of rich presents by the heathen, to supplement the limited resources of the builders. **Silver . . . gold is mine**—Therefore it is only proper that they should bring treasures to him.

9. At present the outlook may be discouraging, the new temple may seem "as nothing" when compared with the former (verse 3), but in the end it will be glorious, even more so than the temple of Solomon. **This**

[i]The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give [k]peace, saith the LORD of hosts.

10 In the four and twentieth *day*

[i] John 1. 14.—[k] Psa. 85. 8, 9; Luke 2. 14; Eph. 2. 14.

latter house—The temple now in process of building. **The former**—The temple of Solomon. Thus translated 9a means that the glory of the present temple will in the end surpass that of Solomon's temple. The thought remains the same if the translation of R. V. (compare LXX.) is accepted, "The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former." **Latter glory**—The glory promised in verse 7. **This house**—See on verse 3. **The former**—The glory present in the temple of Solomon. **In this place**—In Jerusalem as well as in the temple. **Will I give peace**—To this LXX. adds, "and peace of soul to renew the entire foundation, to rebuild this temple." If this addition is a part of the original prophecy, which is not probable, the peace must be that which will be enjoyed in Jerusalem while the nations are being shaken; otherwise, the peace promised is that to be enjoyed subsequent to the shaking of the nations and the glorification of the temple, the peace of the Messianic age, which Jehovah will dispense from his new dwelling place (compare Isa. ii, 2–4; ix, 1–7).

THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE WILL ASSURE NEW BLESSINGS FROM GOD, 10–19.

This also is a message of encouragement and promise, which reaches its culmination in the last sentence, "From this day will I bless you." Again nothing is said concerning the occasion of the prophecy, but its contents enable us to determine it. The words were apparently called forth by new questionings of the people. It would seem that they came to resent the severe accusations made in the first address. Were they not bringing

of the ninth *month*, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying, **11** Thus saith the LORD of hosts; [l]Ask now the priests *concerning* the law, saying, **12** If one bear

[l] Lev. 10. 10, 11; Deut. 33. 10; Mal. 2. 7.

offerings to Jehovah? As a result they came to question the truth of the statements that the calamities which they suffered were the consequence of their neglectfulness, and that the rebuilding of the temple would assure them the restoration of the divine favor. To silence the questionings the prophet propounds to the priests two questions concerning the power of infection possessed by clean and unclean things. The priests reply that the unclean is more contagious than the clean (11–13). This reply the prophet applies to the case in hand. True, the people were offering sacrifices, but, says he, they are insufficient to overcome the unclean in their life and conduct; on the contrary, the unclean conduct makes even their offerings an abomination in the sight of Jehovah (14). He discusses once more the relation of the calamities to their neglectfulness and asserts that they are a direct result of the latter. The address closes with a promise that from now on the divine favor will again rest upon them (15–19).

Verse 10 is similar to i, 1; ii, 1. **Four and twentieth day of the ninth month**—Just three months after the building operations commenced (see on verse 18). The ninth month is called *Chisleu* (Zech. vii, 1) and covers the latter part of November and first part of December.

11. **Ask now the priests concerning the law**—The consulting of the priests was only preparatory to the prophet's real message; their reply was to serve him as a starting point. Literally, *ask a law*—ask for instruction. For *law* see on Hos. iv, 6. Here it is used in the general sense of instruction or legal advice. To give this was the

holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy? And the priests answered and said, No. 13 Then said Haggai, If *one that is* [m]unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean. 14 Then answered Haggai, and said, [n]So *is* this people, and so *is* this nation before me, saith the LORD; and so *is* every work of their hands; and that which they offer there *is* unclean. 15 And now, I pray you,

[m] Num. 19. 11.

[n] Tit. 1. 15.

duty of the priests (Deut. xvii, 8–11; xxxiii, 10; Mal. ii, 7).

12, 13. Two questions are propounded to the priests: (1) Whether or not a garment made holy through contact with holy flesh (compare Lev. vi, 27) transmits this holiness to other articles which might come in contact with it. **Holy flesh**—Flesh of an animal slain for sacrificial purposes (Jer. xi, 15). **Skirt**—Literally, *wing*. A corner of the large outer garment (see on Amos ii, 8) could be turned in so as to form a convenient place in which to carry articles of various kinds. The articles named are common articles of food. The specific case laid before the priests is not provided for in the ceremonial law. To this question the priests give a negative answer. (2) When one who is made unclean by contact with something that is unclean touches the same articles of food, do they become unclean? In this case the answer is in the affirmative, in accordance with Num. xix, 22. **Unclean by a dead body**—By coming in contact with a dead body (compare Num. ix, 10; Lev. xxi, 11). This was the most dreaded kind of uncleanness.

In verse 14 the prophet applies the priestly decisions to the case of the people. **So**—Refers to the substance of the priestly decisions, more especially to the second. **This people**—The people gathered about him (see on i, 2). **Before me**—In my estimate. **Every work of their hands**—Their life and conduct permeated with selfishness (i, 4). **That which they offer**—All their offerings and sacrifices. **There**—Upon the altar mentioned in Ezra iii, 3; near it the prophet probably stood when he delivered the address. All the offerings offered there are an abomination to Jehovah. Why? The answer must be supplied from the context. The people offering sacrifice are like the man carrying the holy flesh; but in neglecting Jehovah and looking only after their own interests they are like the man made unclean through contact with an unclean body. Since the powers of infection of an unclean thing are greater than those of a clean thing, their unclean conduct exerts greater influence than their clean sacrifices and makes unclean their otherwise clean offerings. Haggai does not carry the application further; by implication, however, his words contain an exhortation to change their conduct; in this case, to carry on more earnestly the building operations. After verse 14 LXX. has a lengthy addition which is, however, in all probability, not an original part of the prophecy.

In verses 15–19 the prophet refers once more to the calamities present and past and urges the people to bear in mind that they are the direct result of their indifference, and that any change in their condition depends entirely upon their zeal in building the temple. **And now**—Perhaps better, *but now*. These words are really the introduction to verse 18. A change in their conduct has already begun, hence he may place by the side of the warning in verse 14 a message of commendation and promise. Before he utters the latter he refers once more to the past calamity, so as to bring out more strongly the contrast between the calamity of the past and the prosperity of the future. **Consider—**

[o]consider from this day and upward, from before a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of the LORD: 16 Since those *days* were, [p]when *one* came to an heap of twenty *measures*, there were *but* ten: when *one* came to the pressfat for to draw out fifty *vessels* out of the press, there were *but* twenty. 17 [q]I smote you with blasting and with mildew and with hail [r]in all the labors of your hands; [s]yet ye *turned* not to me,

[o] Chap. 1. 5.—[p] Chap. 1. 6, 9; Zech. 8. 10.—[q] Deut. 28. 22; 1 Kings 8. 37; Amos 4. 9; chap. 1. 9.—[r] Chap. 1. 11.—[s] Jer. 5. 3; Amos 4. 6, 8–11.

As in i, 5–7. **From this day and upward**—R. V., "backward." The R. V. translation has no support (compare 1 Sam. xvi, 13); the word points to the future. The mistranslation is due to a misinterpretation of the entire verse. The meaning becomes clear if a stop is made after *upward;* "Consider from this day and upward!" —that is, consider or bear in mind continually, from this moment on, what I am about to say: on the one hand, that your past neglectfulness brought disaster (15–17); on the other, that zeal and faithfulness will bring prosperity (18, 19).

After this summons to consider, a new beginning should be made: "Before a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of Jehovah; since those days were, (it happened that) when one came. . . . " **Before a stone was laid**—Before building operations were commenced. **Since those days were**—R. V., "Through all that time." An obscure expression. The reading of R. V. gives good enough sense, though the words seem superfluous after 15a, but the Hebrew hardly warrants the translation. LXX. reads, "who were ye," which may represent an original "how were ye." These might be the closing words of a question which has its beginning in verse 15, "Before a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of Jehovah, how did ye fare?" The temporal clause is placed first, because the emphasis rests upon it.

How they did fare is stated in the rest of verse 16 and in verse 17. The thought is similar to that expressed in i, 6, 9–11; disappointment and disaster on every hand. **Heap of twenty**—That is, a heap of sheaves estimated to give twenty measures; but when it was threshed it yielded ten, only one half of what was expected. **Pressfat**—R. V., "winevat." The receptacle in which wine juice is kept after the grapes are pressed out. The grapes, instead of yielding fifty measures of wine, yielded only twenty. **Out of the press**—Omitted in R. V. The noun occurs elsewhere in the sense of *winepress* (so A. V.; compare Isa. lxiii, 3). Some think that it is used in the more general sense of *measure* (so R. V.), or that it is the name of a measure, equivalent to *bath* (Isa. v, 10), which is of the same size as the *ephah* (see on Amos viii, 5). This is not likely. If the text is correct the translation of A. V. is to be preferred; otherwise the word must be omitted as an explanatory gloss to the preceding "winevat."

Verse 17 explains why the threshing floor and the winepress proved sore disappointments. Jehovah smote the fields with "blasting and mildew" (see on Amos iv, 9). **Hail**—Concerning the frequency with which hail falls in Palestine G. A. Smith says (*Historical Geography*, p. 64), "During most winters both hail and snow fall on the hills; hail is common." It is frequently mentioned in the Old Testament; always as an instrument of divine judgment. **The labors of your hands**—Everything they had cultivated with great effort and toil. The purpose of the judgment was to bring the people to their senses, but it failed (see on i, 5, and references there). **Yet ye turned not to me**—This is undoubtedly the thought, but it is difficult to get it from the present Hebrew text, which Keil calls "a perfectly unusual construction." Originally the words here may have been identical with the refrain in Amos iv, 6–11. It is worthy of note that the causes of calamity

saith the LORD. 18 Consider now from this day and upward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth *month, even* from [t]the day that the foundation of the LORD'S temple was laid, consider *it.* 19 [u]Is the seed yet in the barn? yea, as yet the vine, and the fig tree, and the

[t] Zech. 8. 9.

[u] Zech. 8. 12.

mentioned here are not the same as those named earlier in the book, though the calamity itself is the same. Here they are blasting, mildew, hail; in i, 10, 11, drought. This with some linguistic peculiarities has led André to conclude that this discourse does not come from Haggai; but the linguistic peculiarities are by no means conclusive, and surely there may have been several different causes that brought about barrenness or the failure of the crops. Others consider only verse 17 a later addition, originally a marginal note, based upon Amos iv, 9. In support of this claim it is pointed out that LXX. contains an addition to verse 14, which, in part at least, is based upon Amos v, 10.

With the calamities of the past fresh in their minds, they are to observe the change in fortune which is about to occur. If they bring this change into connection with their former indifference and their present zeal, they can no longer doubt that there exists a relation of cause and effect between indifference and calamity and between zeal and prosperity; and this recognition should greatly increase their interest in the cause of Jehovah. 18a is to be interpreted as in verse 15 (see there); *upward* again points to the future. *This day* is defined in the succeeding clause, "from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month," and this in turn is called "the day that the foundation of the Lord's temple was laid." Both explanatory clauses are considered later additions by some, because (1) they are superfluous; (2) i, 15, states that the work was begun three months earlier; (3) Ezra iii, 10, says that the foundation was laid about fifteen years before. To these arguments reply may be made: (1) Even granting the historicity of Ezra iii, 10 (see pp. 548ff.), the two passages are not necessarily contradictory, for it is not impossible that after an interval of fifteen years the foundations were found to be in a sufficiently unsatisfactory condition to demand a relaying. (2) Three months may have been spent in doing the preliminary work; rubbish had to be cleared away, building material had to be hauled, etc. (3) That the words might have been omitted is true, but, since the change in fortune was closely connected with the rebuilding of the temple, is it not perfectly natural that the pivotal point of time should receive special emphasis? From this very moment the prophet desires them to have their eyes open to see what the future will have in store. At the time of the laying of the foundation a religious gathering may have been held, and that would be a suitable occasion on which to utter these words of encouragement. It cannot be objected that the manifestations of enthusiasm three months earlier should have been the turning point in their fortune. How could they tell what would become of the next spring's crops? The critical time of the year comes after the date mentioned here (compare Amos iv, 7). Besides, verse 19 makes it clear that a partial change could be seen, the drought had ceased. The careful definition of the date is in perfect accord with the repetition of the exhortation "consider it."

Verse 19 states what they are to consider, but it is not parallel with verses 16, 17, as if it called attention once more to the calamity of the past; it points rather to the restoration of the divine favor present and future. **Seed** —The seed corn. Haggai inquires whether it is still in the barn; he evidently expects a negative answer. But

pomegranate, and the olive tree, hath not brought forth: from this day will I bless *you*.

20 And again the word of the LORD came unto Haggai in the four and twentieth *day* of the month, saying, 21 Speak to Zerubbabel, [x]governor of Judah, saying, [y]I will shake the heavens and the earth; 22 And [z]I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen; and [a]I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword

[x] Chap. 1. 14.——[y] Verses 6, 7; Heb. 12. 26.

[z] Dan. 2. 44; Matt. 24. 7.——[a] Mic. 5. 10; Zech. 4. 6; 9. 10.

if the seed is sown, this in itself is an evidence that the divine favor is returning. In former years it had to be left in the barns because the absence of rain made plowing and sowing impossible. Now the prophet points to the fact that rain has come and that the seed has been sown. The succeeding clauses also should be translated as a question, "Hath not as yet the vine, the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive borne fruit?" This question presupposes an affirmative answer, as the presence of *not* clearly shows. These trees have given evidence of a change, for they have borne fruit. The ingathering of these fruits begins at the time of the year when the first steps were taken (i, 15), and continues several months. If for a year or two the crops were poor the people could be persuaded very readily that the better results were due to their renewed activity. But the blessings already experienced are only the beginning; in the closing words the prophet promises a continuation of the divine favor.

The Exaltation of Zerubbabel, 20–23.

The fourth utterance of Haggai is Messianic in character; it promises the exaltation of Zerubbabel, the prince of David's house. In the second discourse the prophet announced the shaking of the nations, which would pave the way for the establishment of the kingdom of God (see on ii, 7). Since Haggai, like the earlier prophets (Isa. ix, 1ff.; xi, 1ff.; Mic. v, 1ff.), expected the Messianic king to be of the dynasty of David, and since he believed that the shaking would occur in the near future, it was quite natural that his Messianic hopes should center in the descendant of the house of David who was standing out most prominently in his day (compare also Zech. vi, 9ff.).

20. The message was delivered on the same day as the preceding and forms the climax of the promises made there. The people will, indeed, be blessed abundantly in their temporal affairs, but there is more to come; the long-anticipated Messianic king is soon to set up his kingdom of peace and righteousness. 21. Zerubbabel (see on i, 1) is the central figure of the promise, therefore this oracle is addressed to him exclusively. For 21b see on ii, 6.

Verse 22 is an expansion of ii, 7; it also speaks of the upheaval expected by Haggai to take place in the near future (see on ii, 7). **Throne**—Used collectively—thrones, governments. Nations and governments will be overthrown. **Strength**—Which enables them to exist and gives them authority over others. **Chariots, . . . horses**—These and the soldiers using them, that is, the well-equipped armies, are the source of their power and strength. With them gone, their power vanishes and the nations themselves will perish. **By the sword of his brother**—The prophet is thinking of the civil war, which threatened the Persian empire in the beginning of the reign of Darius. Haggai evidently expected these struggles to bring about the downfall of the great empire, which consisted of many nations.

23. The dissolution of the hostile world power will clear the way for

of his brother. 23 In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the LORD, [b]and will make thee as a signet: for [c]I have chosen thee, saith the LORD of hosts.

[b] Cant. 8. 6; Jer. 22. 24.

[c] Isa. 42. 1; 43. 10.

the setting up of the kingdom of God under the rule of the Messianic king. **In that day**—When the power of the nations will collapse. **Zerubbabel**—See on i, 1. **My servant**—An epithet applied to Zerubbabel because he was ordained to carry out the divine purpose (see on Zech. iii, 8). **Will make thee as a signet**—The signet ring is one of the most precious possessions of the Oriental; he guards it carefully and carries it about with him constantly (Jer. xxii, 24; Song of Songs viii, 6). Hence the promise means that Zerubbabel shall be exceedingly precious to Jehovah, who will keep him constantly under his protecting care. **I have chosen thee**—Jehovah has selected Zerubbabel to be *Branch* (see on Zech. iii, 8; vi, 12, 13), who will be the ruler of the kingdom of God (compare Isa. xlii, 1; xliii, 10, etc.). The thrice-repeated "saith Jehovah" adds solemnity and weight to the promise. On the fulfillment of this and similar prophecies see closing remarks on Micah, chapter v.

From this passage and similar utterances in the Book of Zechariah, Sellin has attempted to prove that, at the instigation of the two prophets, Zerubbabel was crowned king, but that he was soon dethroned and put to death by the Persians. At one time he went so far as to identify Zerubbabel with the "suffering Servant" of Isa. liii; but subsequently he modified his view and has now given up entirely the identification of Zerubbabel with the "Servant."

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF ZECHARIAH.

The Prophet.

THE prophet Zechariah—the name means *Jehovah remembers*—is called "the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo" (i, 1), in Ezra v, 1; vi, 14, "the son of Iddo." The last named was the chief of one of the priestly families that returned from exile with Zerubbabel and Joshua (Neh. xii, 4). Berechiah may have died young or at least may never have come to prominence, and so the name of the better-known grandfather came to be attached to that of the prophet. That the latter should be called *the son* of the former is easily explained by the loose use of that term among Semitic peoples. The only passages outside of the Book of Zechariah in which the prophet is mentioned are Ezra v, 1; vi, 14, where it is recorded that he, in company with Haggai, was instrumental in reviving interest in the rebuilding of the temple. In Nehemiah xii, 16, a priest Zechariah is mentioned, who may be identical with our prophet; if so, Zechariah, like Ezekiel, combined the priestly and the prophetic offices.

For other information concerning the prophet's life we are dependent upon the book bearing his name. According to i, 1, his activity began "in the eighth month, in the second year of Darius" (520 B. C.), that is, about two months after Haggai began preaching. The last date mentioned (vii, 1) is the fourth day of the ninth month of the fourth year of King Darius. From these chronological notes it would seem that the public activity of Zechariah covered only about two years. If he was the grandson of Iddo, who returned from exile in 537, Zechariah was probably a young man when the prophetic call came to him, and we may assume, perhaps, that his influence continued to be felt for many years subsequent to 518

B. C. The time demanded a prophet with a living faith and moral earnestness. The lofty anticipations of the preëxilic prophets and the prophets of the exilic period had not been realized; the foreign oppressor was still strong and powerful, while the Jews were poor and feeble; as a result the first hopeful enthusiasm of the returned exiles had been displaced by despondency and gloom. To remove these and to revive faith in God and in the ultimate triumph of his kingdom was the task of Zechariah.

Of the later years of the prophet we know nothing. Numerous traditions and legends have grown up around the name of Zechariah, but they are of little or no historical value. One of these asserts that, at an advanced age, he died in Jerusalem and was buried by the side of Haggai.

Unity and Date of the Book.

Since between chapters viii and ix a distinct break may be noticed, it has become customary to divide the Book of Zechariah into two parts, chapters i—viii and chapters ix—xiv. The utterances contained in the first eight chapters are ascribed to Zechariah by their headings (i, 1, 7; vii, 1), but no statements of this character are found in chapters ix—xiv. This in itself does not point to diversity of authorship, for it is not necessary to place at the head of each separate oracle the name of the author; the name found in the earlier chapters might be thought to cover all the utterances of the entire book. And yet, for other reasons, many Old Testament scholars believe that chapters ix—xiv do not come from Zechariah, the author of chapters i—viii. This makes it necessary to consider, first of all, the unity of the book, to see whether it is the work of one prophet or of more. Only when this question is settled is it possible to consider intelligently the question of date or dates.

All scholars are agreed that chapters i—viii come from Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo (i, 1, 7; vii, 1), and that the prophecies contained in these chapters were de-

livered in the second and fourth years of Darius (520 and 518 B. C.). The historical situation of Judah during these years is described in the Introduction to Haggai (see pp. 548ff.). but it may not be amiss to point out briefly how the internal evidence confirms the testimony of the chronological notes. The temple and the city walls were still in ruins (i, 7-17); the foundation was laid, but the completion seemed far distant (iv, 6-10); peace had been restored throughout the Persian empire (i, 7-21); the nonfulfillment of the preëxilic prophecies had caused the people to lose confidence in the civil and religious leaders (iii, iv), and to doubt the reality of the divine interest and power (i, 16). All this was true in 520 B. C., and the messages of Zechariah contained in chapters i—vi were admirably adapted to the needs of that time, and they were not without effect.

The building enterprise was resumed, and two years later sufficient progress had been made to raise the question whether the time had not arrived to discontinue the fasts instituted to commemorate events centering around the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 (vii, 1-7; viii, 18, 19); evidently the prospects were becoming brighter (viii, 20-23). In view of this internal evidence there can hardly be any doubt that the prophecies in chapters i—viii were uttered in 520 and 518 for the comfort, encouragement, and inspiration of the postexilic community.

Can the same assertion be made of chapters ix—xiv? Are they the work of the author of chapters i—viii? If not, is it possible to determine their date?

I. *Unity.*—Until near the middle of the seventeenth century no doubts were expressed concerning the unity of the Book of Zechariah. Then the Cambridge theologian Joseph Mede suggested that chapters ix—xiv came not from Zechariah but from Jeremiah. He was led to this conclusion partly by the testimony of Matt. xxvii, 9, which quotes Zech. xi, 13, as coming from Jeremiah, and partly by a study of the contents of the chapters, which he thought pointed to a period other

than that of Zechariah. "There is no scripture saith they (ix—xiv) are Zachary's, but there is scripture saith they are Jeremy's as this of the evangelist." And again, "Certainly if a man weighs the contents of some of them, they should in likelihood be of an elder date than the time of Zachary, namely, before the captivity, for the subjects of some of them were scarce in being after that time." Since the days of Mede, and especially since the publication of Fluegge's treatise on Zechariah, in 1784, the unity of the Book of Zechariah has received perhaps as much attention as any problem of Old Testament criticism. Professor Robinson (*American Journal of Semitic Languages,* xii, pp. 2ff.) enumerates one hundred and three authors who, since the days of Mede, have treated the subject in one or more publications. According to his classification thirty-six of these "defend" the unity of the book; it should be noted, however, that in some instances the defense is by no means enthusiastic; J. J. S. Perowne, for example, who is classed among the defenders, is content with saying, "Indeed, it is not easy to say which way the weight of evidence preponderates."

Modern scholarship tends more and more toward denying to the prophet Zechariah the last six chapters of the book; even cautious and otherwise exceedingly conservative scholars like Von Orelli and Kirkpatrick have felt constrained to give up the unity of the book. "It seems," says the latter, "in the highest degree improbable that these chapters can be the work of Zechariah, the coadjutor of Zerubbabel and Joshua in their great work of rebuilding the temple." Within recent years there has been made but one attempt to defend, by the use of strictly scientific methods, the unity of the book, namely, by Professor Robinson in the dissertation to which reference has been made. Other scholars hold the same view, but no one else has treated the subject so exhaustively. C. H. H. Wright, both in the *Bampton Lectures* of 1878 and in his *Introduction to the Old Testament,* takes the ground that "the arguments in favor of the genuineness and unity of the book overweigh

those adduced on the other side." So also T. T. Perowne, "We have not as yet sufficient ground for relinquishing the ancient and tenable belief that the Book of Zechariah . . . is throughout the work of the author whose name it bears."

An exhaustive discussion of the entire question would require more space than can be given to it in a work of this kind, and all that the present writer can expect to do is to point out the lines on which the investigation must proceed, and the most probable results to which this inquiry leads. The student who desires to pursue the subject further may find much valuable information in the dissertation of Professor Robinson; in the *Expositor's Bible;* in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible,* article "Zechariah"; in Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible,* article "Zechariah"; in Driver's *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament,* and in other books and articles mentioned by these authors.

The investigation must be carried on along three lines, the linguistic, the historical, and the theological:

1. *Linguistic Characteristics.* It has been pointed out again and again by writers that there exist between the two parts of the Book of Zechariah very marked differences in diction, in style, and in other features of composition. (1) With reference to the general style the justice of Eichhorn's remark is recognized by all. "The manner of writing," says he, "in the second portion is far loftier and more mysterious, the images employed grander and more magnificent." Rosenmueller calls the style of the first eight chapters "prosaic, feeble, poor"; that of the last six, "poetic, weighty, concise, flowing." (2) Attention has been called to the preference, in one or the other section, for certain phrases and words—for example, in chapters i—viii, "thus saith Jehovah," "the word of Jehovah came unto," the parenthetic "oracle of Jehovah"; in ix—xiv, "in that day," etc. Long lists of individual words have been prepared. (3) In the second part are wanting the careful headings indicating author and date, which are found in the first part. (4) The figures and imagery of the one differ from those of the other.

The first part abounds in visions, with imagery mysterious enough to require an interpreter; the second part has no visions, but in chapter xi it introduces two allegories. It has the images of the shepherd and the sheep, of Jehovah as the captain of his people, of the use of the people as weapons, and others.

Some of these arguments possess little or no weight: (1) The occurrence of visions and the use of certain imagery in one part of the book (objection 4), while in the other part visions are absent and different imagery is used, is not conclusive against the unity of authorship. The change may be due to a change of subject or of purpose (compare Amos i—vi with vii—ix). (2) The absence of careful headings in the second part (3) proves nothing, by itself. (3) Over against the lists of words and phrases which are thought to point to difference in authorship (2) long lists of words and phrases thought to favor unity of authorship have been presented. In addition, Professor Robinson has pointed out that both parts contain specimens of clumsy diction, of repetition of the same words, of the use of phrases—not the same in both parts—unused by other writers, of the frequent use of vocatives, and of variableness of spelling. But arguments of this sort prove either too much or nothing at all, for, as Cheyne says, "by such a method it would be easy to prove that the whole of the Old Testament had but one author." Similarities and resemblances in language and style may easily be explained, but when different parts of one and the same book show marked differences the question arises inevitably whether such differences can be harmonized with unity of authorship. However we may explain the resemblances in the language of the two parts—and they can all be explained by the fact that both sections belong to the same stage in the history of the Hebrew language—the question still arises whether the differences in style and language which remain after all due allowance has been made for difference in subject-matter can be harmonized with unity of authorship. The present writer has

expressed in another connection (see on Joel, p. 137) his conviction that style and diction by themselves are unsafe criteria to determine the date of a writing, and yet it seems to him that in the present case the two parts differ so widely in the broad and general linguistic features that it becomes at least very probable that the two parts were not written by one and the same author.

2. *Historical Statements and Allusions.* The historical situation described and presupposed in chapters ix—xiv is not that of chapters i—viii. The prophecies in the early part of the book have an intimate connection with the events in the days of Darius; they meet the needs of a well-defined historical situation. The Jews are encouraged to rebuild the temple and the city; they are promised speedy deliverance from their present distress, and success and prosperity for the immediate future. Such message was adapted to the needs of the Jewish community in 520; but are the pictures of the impending destruction of Jerusalem, and of the other calamities which are to befall the nation (chapters xii, xiv) before the final triumph shall come, adapted to the needs of the same community? What is true of these two chapters is equally true of other portions of ix—xiv. This claim does not imply a denial of the reality of prediction in Zech. ix—xiv; for whenever the words were written, it is clear that the writer penetrated the future until he beheld the final consummation of the kingdom of God; nevertheless, the prophecies whose dates are beyond question make it certain that the prophets always connected the future with the present, that their messages were intended primarily for their day and generation. Now, the message of chapters ix—xiv presupposes an historical situation in Judah other than that presupposed in chapters i—viii; and this remains true, though it may be impossible to determine the exact period into which these chapters fit. And what is true of conditions within the Jewish community is equally true of conditions throughout the Eastern world. "Zech. i—viii picture the whole earth at peace, which was true at least

of all Syria; they portend no danger to Jerusalem from the heathen, but describe her peace and fruitful expansion in terms most suitable to the circumstances imposed upon her by the solid and clement policy of the earlier Persian kings. This is all changed in ix—xiv. The nations are restless; a siege of Jerusalem is imminent, and her salvation is to be assured only by much war and a terrible shedding of blood. *We know exactly how Israel fared and felt in the early sections of the Persian period; her interest in the politics of the world, her feelings toward her governors, and her whole attitude to the heathen were not at that time those which are reflected in Zech. ix—xiv.*" True, Professor Robinson has attempted to prove that these chapters had their origin between 518 and 516, but his arguments are not convincing. Most writers who favor the unity of the book are content with proving that the historical situation presupposed is that of the period after the exile, which is far from proving that it fits the period of Zechariah.

3. *Theological Ideas Expressed and Implied.* The opponents of the unity of the book call attention to the diversity of theological ideas in the two parts. On the other hand, Robinson devotes one section of his dissertation to a demonstration of the similarity in fundamental ideas between the two parts.

A brief outline of his argument will reveal immediately the weakness of his position: 1. An unusually deep spiritual tone pervades the entire book. 2. There is a similar attitude of hope and expectation in both parts: (1) The return of the whole nation. (2) Jerusalem shall be inhabited. (3) The temple shall be built and shall become the center of the nation's religious life. (Under this head he gives as references from the second part ix, 8; xiv, 20, 21. Do these verses contain anything that could possibly be construed as a promise of the rebuilding of the temple?) (4) Messianic hope is peculiarly strong in both. (5) Peace and prosperity are expected. (6) The idea of God's providence as extending to the whole earth.

3. The prophet's attitude toward Judah is the same in both parts. 4. The prophet's attitude toward the nations, the enemies of the theocracy, is the same in both parts.

That there are resemblances between the two parts is not and need not be denied, but do the similarities enumerated prove anything? If they prove that the two parts come from one author, it becomes a very simple matter to prove, by the same line of reasoning, that the same author wrote a number of other prophetic books. Vague and general resemblances in ideas, such as may be found between these two parts, can be noted between other prophetic writings coming certainly from different authors, and yet in these cases no one would think of claiming that they prove common authorship. Again the real question is whether the differences in ideas can be harmonized with unity of authorship. Such differences are discovered as soon as one goes behind the general outline of thought, and attempts a comparison in details. In ix—xiv there is no concern for the rebuilding of the temple, while in i—viii the sublimest hopes center around the completion of the house of Jehovah. True, the Messianic hope is strong in both parts, but are there not marked differences between the Messianic ideas and ideals of i—viii and those of ix—xiv? (Compare iii, 8; vi, 12, 13, with ix, 9, 10; chapter viii with chapter xiv.) Alongside of a few general similarities in the hopes for the future of the Jewish community may be seen notable differences in detail (compare i, 21; ii, 8-11; viii, 7, 8, with xii, 2ff.). Equally noteworthy is the silence in chapters xii—xiv concerning a return (compare ii, 6ff.). See further on *Teaching of the Book,* pp. 601ff.

As in all investigations of this character, a mathematical demonstration is not possible, and yet the facts enumerated make it, to say the least, exceedingly probable that chapters ix—xiv do not come from Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo.

But even within chapters ix—xiv the question of unity has been raised. Nowack, for example, finds in this part of the

book no less than four originally independent pieces: I. Chapter ix; II. chapters (x, 1, 2) x, 3—xi, 3; III. chapters xi, 4-17 + xiii, 7-9; IV. chapter xiv. However, most commentators who doubt the unity of the section recognize only two independent portions: ix—xi + xiii, 7-9, and xii, 1—xiii, 6 + xiv, 1-21. That differences exist between these two portions is recognized even by those who believe that the entire section comes from one author. The most important of these differences may be enumerated: Chapters ix—xi speak of a return from exile, chapters xii—xiv are silent concerning it; the first part (ix, 9, 10) speaks of a Messianic king, in the second Jehovah himself is king (xiv, 16); in the first part the picture of the future is comparatively simple, in the second part it is "highly imaginative and obscure"; in the first part the horse is to be cut off from Jerusalem (ix, 10), in the second part it is retained (xiv, 20); Ephraim and Joseph are common names in chapter x, but they are not found in chapters xii—xiv. On the other hand, it may be pointed out that the two sections speak in the same manner of idolatry, of the heathen, of their punishment and conversion, and that language and style favor unity of authorship. That one author is responsible for all these chapters is the opinion of Stade and Cheyne, who have subjected the matter to a more thorough investigation than anyone else within recent years. "With perhaps one or two exceptions," says the latter, "chapters ix—xi and xii—xiv are so closely welded together that even analysis is impossible." On the other hand, cautious scholars like Driver and Kirkpatrick are inclined to recognize two authors. The data are much less numerous and decisive than they are when chapters i—viii are compared with chapters ix—xiv, and with our present knowledge or lack of knowledge it may be best to leave the unity of chapters ix—xiv an open question, though it may be admitted that the internal evidence in favor of diversity of authorship appears to be stronger than that in favor of unity.

II. *Date.*—If chapters ix—xiv do not come from the sixth

century Zechariah, is it possible to determine their date? In the investigation of this point we are confronted, as in the case of Joel (see pp. 129ff.), with the difficulty that the internal evidence, upon which the conclusion must be based, seems to point in different directions. As a result some scholars favor a preëxilic, others a postexilic date. The defenders of the preëxilic date, with very few exceptions, believe that chapters ix—xiv contain two separate oracles, coming from two authors living in different periods. The first oracle, chapters ix—xi, is commonly assigned to the latter part of the eighth century—some have ascribed it to the Zechariah mentioned in Isa. viii, 2; chapters xii—xiv, chiefly on account of xii, 11, to the years between the death of Josiah (608) and the fall of Jerusalem (586).

Since the two parts, ix—xi and xii—xiv, present marked differences, and since many scholars are inclined to assign them to different dates, it may be advisable to consider the dates of the two parts separately:

1. *Chapters IX—XI.* The evidence thought to point to a preëxilic date may be summarized as follows: (1) The kingdoms of Judah and Ephraim (Israel) are still standing (ix, 10, 13; x, 6). (2) A partial exile of the northern kingdom is implied (x, 6, 8-10). If a complete exile were implied, a date subsequent to the fall of Samaria (722-721) would have to be assumed, but other passages imply that the northern kingdom is still standing; besides, the mention of Gilead in x, 10, makes it probable that the districts east of the Jordan had just passed through severe suffering, which points to a date subsequent to 734, when Galilee and Gilead were devastated by Tiglath-pileser III (2 Kings xv, 29). (3) Both Egypt and Assyria are still powerful empires (x, 9-11); the arrogance of Assyria is at its height (x, 11). (4) The prophet expects the avenger to come from the northeast, destroying in order Syria, Phœnicia, Philistia (ix, 1-7). This is the road which Sennacherib took in 702-701 (compare *Taylor Cylinder*, ii, 34ff.). (5) The prophecy implies that there is danger of

an open rupture between Israel and Judah (xi, 14; compare 2 Kings xvi, 5, 6). (6) The threat against Damascus is appropriate in the eighth century (compare 2 Kings xvi, 9). (7) The expression "flock of slaughter" (xi, 4), the vivid picture of oppression (xi, 5), and of the cutting off of three shepherds in one month (xi, 8), reflect the state of anarchy and the foreign entanglements following the death of Jeroboam II (see Introduction to Hosea, p. 18). Two of the shepherds are thought to be Zechariah and Shallum (2 Kings xv, 8-15). To account for the other it is said that during a period of such anarchy a third rival king might easily have arisen, whose name might have been omitted in Kings, because he was soon put out of the way. (8) Idolatry and soothsaying are widespread in the land (x, 2; compare Isa. ii, 6-8). (9). With the picture of the Messianic king in ix, 9, 10, may be compared Isa. ix, 1-7, and Mic. v, 1-4. (10) Other minor similarities are pointed out between this section and the eighth century prophets; ix, 10; x, 4, 5, are compared with Mic. v, 10; Isa. ix, 5, 6; ix, 1-7, with Amos i, 3ff.; x, 10, with Mic. vii, 12, 13. The style and the vivid imagery are said to have their counterparts in Hosea.

Over against these arguments may be placed several facts in favor of a postexilic date: (1) A natural interpretation of ix, 11ff., and of x, 3ff., makes it certain that not only a partial or complete exile of the northern kingdom is presupposed, but an exile of Judah as well. (2) Whenever the older prophets announce judgment upon the nations they are accustomed to state the causes of the judgment. In the postexilic writings this is not done, because the wrongs done to the Jews throughout the centuries, culminating in the destruction of the holy city, are well known, and all recognize that they deserve the severest retribution (compare ix, 1-7). (3) The hostility toward Philistia (ix, 5-7), especially the curse pronounced upon Ashdod (6), becomes more intelligible in postexilic days (compare Neh. iv, 7; xiii, 24). It was during the exile that the Edomites began to press westward and

threaten the Philistian territory. (4) The mention of the "sons of Greece" (ix, 13) points to a postexilic date. The expression itself, it is true, might have been used in preexilic times (see p. 132), but in this passage Greece is thought of as a world power, which it did not become until after the exile. (5) While the dependence of this section upon other Old Testament writings has been exaggerated, especially by Stade, it is probable that in some cases dependence does exist; compare, for example, ix, 1-8, with Ezek. xxviii, 1-5; chapter xi with Ezek. xxxiv, Jer. xxv, 34-38; x, 3-12, with Hos. ii. This list might be enlarged, but the references given may be sufficient to show that a close connection in thought, and sometimes in form of expression, exists between this section and other Old Testament writings. Now, it is always difficult in the case of two similar passages to say which is the original (see p. 136), and yet in this instance those who have given the subject the most thorough examination believe that Zechariah is the borrower. To De Wette, for example, the evidence in favor of the dependence of chapters ix—xiv upon Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and other preëxilic prophets became so convincing that, after defending a preëxilic date for many years, he found himself compelled, on this ground alone, to change his opinion and insist that these chapters come from the postexilic period.

Is it possible to decide between this apparently conflicting evidence? Of the arguments in favor of the preëxilic date, (8) loses its force in view of Mal. iii, 5 (compare also Josephus, *Antiquities,* viii; ii, 5); (9) also must be set aside, for the picture of the Messianic king is not identical with those of the eighth century. Indeed, it contains features which are foreign to that age; besides, ix, 9, reads as if the "daughter of Zion" had no king at the time the words were uttered. The resemblances enumerated under (10) may be explained satisfactorily on the assumption that the author of chapters ix—xi was acquainted with other prophetic books. Argument (7) also is without much force. The first two passages (xi, 4, and

xi, 5) might equally well describe the troubled conditions in postexilic times, as they are pictured in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah; xi, 8, cannot be fitted into the eighth century without importing a ruler of whom no hint is given anywhere in the Old Testament. Argument (5) does not necessarily point to the preëxilic period. If the staff "Bands" signifies not a united nation, but, as is even more probable, the promise of a reunion (see on xi, 14), the reference would fit equally well into the postexilic period. The expectation of a reunion of the north and south is a common feature of postexilic prophecy (see on viii, 13); xi, 14, speaks of the destruction of the hope pointing to a final complete reunion between north and south, which was an essential condition of ultimate triumph. Again, (2) does not *prove* a preëxilic date; at the most it permits it. The statements receive a much more natural interpretation if applied to the exiles of both north and south. The remaining arguments also are inconclusive. (1) Do ix, 10, 13; x, 6, really prove that the kingdoms of Ephraim and Judah are still in existence? In ix, 10, the prophet speaks of the Messianic age; but the restoration of both kingdoms in connection with the dawn of the Messianic age is expected by all the prophets. All that the prophet assumes is the completion of the restoration, to which he looks forward with a yearning assurance. Surely, there is no reason for doubting that in the various returns beginning with 537 many descendants of northern families returned to Palestine. This passage again does not militate against a postexilic date. This leaves but three closely related arguments, (3), (4) and (6). The occurrence of the name Assyria does not prove the existence of Assyria as a world power, for the name is used of Babylon (Lam. v, 6) and of Persia (Ezra vi, 22), and at a later time of Syria. The power of Assyria made such deep and permanent impression upon the Jews that the name was retained as a designation of the powerful successors of Assyria, long after the fall of Assyria itself. So it may be used in this passage. With this usage may be compared the

expression "land of Omri" or "house of Omri," found as a designation of Israel on the Assyrian inscriptions long after the death of Omri himself. Egypt may be mentioned as the typical oppressor of Israel (see on Joel, p. 189), or it may be the Egypt of the Ptolemies. Syria, Phœnicia, and Philistia are, indeed, condemned by Amos for their cruelties. It is noteworthy, however, that in ix, 1-7, these nations are not spoken of as *present* enemies of Judah; but even if they were mentioned as such, the possibility of a postexilic date would not be excluded. The Philistines continued their hostility down to the Maccabean period; Phœnicia is denounced by Ezekiel, and there is good reason for supposing that our passage is dependent on Ezek. xxviii, 1-5; Hadrach, Hamath, and Damascus might be mentioned in postexilic times as well as in the eighth century B.C.

All the points alluded to here but briefly are discussed at length by Robinson, and he reaches the conclusion, which seems well founded, that every passage quoted in favor of a preëxilic date receives an equally satisfactory, or even more satisfactory, explanation when assigned to a postexilic date. On the other hand, some of the evidence in favor of a postexilic date, especially that mentioned under (1), (4), (5), receives no natural explanation if a preëxilic date is assumed. We may conclude, therefore, that chapters ix—xi were written in the postexilic period by a prophet who was thoroughly familiar with the more ancient sacred writings of his people, and who may have availed himself to a large extent of preëxilic material.

2. *Chapters XII—XIV.* The defenders of the preëxilic date of these chapters assign them almost universally to the years between 608 and 586 B.C. In favor of this date the following reasons are advanced: (1) The earthquake in Uzziah's reign appears to be quite fresh in the memories of the people (xiv, 5). (2) The same is true of the death of Josiah (xii, 11). (3) Chapter xiv, 18, presupposes hostility against Judah on the part of Egypt, which was true of the reigns of Josiah and Jehoiakim. (4) Chapter xii, 10, is best

interpreted as a reference to the persecutions under Manasseh (2 Kings xxi). (5) Chapter xiii, 2-6, makes it clear that idolatry and false prophecy are prevalent (compare Jer. xxiii, 9ff.). (6) The northern kingdom has disappeared from the scene; all interest is centered in Judah and Jerusalem. Attention is called also to the mention of Geba (xiv, 10), the northern boundary of Judah. (7) The references to the "house of David" (xii, 7, 8, 10, 12) indicate that the kingdom of Judah is still in existence. (8) The predictions of the siege and doom of Jerusalem (xii, 2ff.; xiv, 2ff.) are best explained as pointing to the impending destruction of the city by the Chaldeans.

Again the arguments fail to establish the position taken by the defenders of a preëxilic date. Some of the passages quoted as proving a preëxilic date receive a more natural explanation if a postexilic date is assumed; the others can be explained equally well as coming from that period. (1) If the prophecy is dated after 608 the earthquake must have occurred about one hundred and fifty years before, so that a personal reminiscence is excluded; but if the earthquake was terrible enough to leave a vivid impression for one hundred and fifty years it might certainly be remembered for many years more (see further on xiv, 5). (2) The reference in xii, 11, is uncertain; but even if the passage refers to the mourning for Josiah it does not establish the preëxilic date. The tragic death of the reformer king was remembered for centuries, as is proved by the account which 2 Chron. xxxv, 25, gives of the public mourning for the king. It is distinctly stated that the custom was continued "unto this day," that is, about 350 B.C. (3) Chapter xiv, 18, neither says nor implies anything concerning the hostility of Egypt; the latter is named for an entirely different reason (see comment). (4) It is mere assumption to connect xii, 10, with the persecutions under Manasseh or with the murder of Uriah by Jehoiakim (Jer. xxvi, 20ff.). It is much more natural to connect it with the events described in xi, 9ff. (5) False prophecy (xiii, 2-6)

was not unknown in the postexilic period (Neh. vi, 10ff.). Concerning the condemnation of idolatry Kirkpatrick says, "The prediction of the final extirpation of idolatry appears to be a repetition of Hosea's prediction (ii, 17), and does not necessarily imply the prevalence of idolatry" (compare Isa. lxv, 1ff.). (6) There is no reference to the northern kingdom, but this silence proves only that the northern kingdom was destroyed, which is equally true of the postexilic period; the mention of Judah, however, does not prove the existence of the southern kingdom, for the postexilic community is often called Judah, as chapters i—viii clearly show. (7) The "house of David" is mentioned, but there is no reference to a king; and 1 Chron. iii, 17-24; Ezra viii, 2, prove that the descendants of David were reckoned as a distinct family as late as the time of the Chronicler. On the other hand, the manner in which the "house of Levi" is coördinated with the "house of David" in xii, 12ff., points to the postexilic period, when for the first time the civil and ecclesiastical rulers possessed equal authority. (8) The coloring of chapters xii, xiv is more in accord with the apocalyptic pictures of Joel and Daniel than with any predictions of the fall of Jerusalem found in Jeremiah or other preëxilic writings.

As in the case of chapters ix—xi, we find, then, that the evidence for the preëxilic date of chapters xii—xiv is not conclusive. In addition a few facts in favor of the late date may be pointed out: (1) The prominence given to the priestly family (xii, 12, 13). (2) The prominent place assigned to the feast of tabernacles (xiv, 16). (3) The dependence of the section upon earlier prophecies (compare chapters xii, xiv with Ezek. xxxviii, xxxix; xiv, 8-11, with Ezek. xlvii, 1-12; xii, 1, with Isa. li, 13). (4) The apocalyptic tone of the entire section. The evidence may not be as extensive and decisive as in chapters ix—xi, but it is definite enough to make it more than probable that these chapters also are of a postexilic date.

Can the exact date or dates of chapters ix—xiv be determined? Kirkpatrick is content with saying, "In so difficult a

question it is necessary to speak with hesitation; but at present it seems to me that these chapters belong to the same class of apocalyptic-eschatological prophecy as Isa. xxiv—xxvii, and may with considerable probability be assigned to the same period, the first sixty or seventy years after the return." Wellhausen dates ix—xi + xiii, 7-9, in the first part of the second century, xii—xiv in the "Maccabean period," which means, at about the same time. Nowack, who divides the section into four independent parts, assigns ix, 1—xi, 3, to the period "subsequent to Alexander the Great." Of xi, 4-17 + xiii, 7-9, he says, "This alone may be regarded as beyond doubt, that we are directed to a time after the exile," though he refers favorably to Wellhausen's suggestion that the passage may reflect the incidents of the last decade preceding the Maccabean uprising. Of xii, 1—xiii, 6, and chapter xiv he is unwilling to say more than that they belong to the later post-exilic times, chapter xiv after Malachi. Marti thinks that the entire section, with the possible exception of x, 1, 2, originated in the year 160 B.C.

The uncertainty is due, in part, to our ignorance concerning the greater part of the postexilic period; in part, to the indefiniteness of the data supplied by the chapters themselves. There is, indeed, only one reference that furnishes some sort of a foothold. Joel, about 400 B.C., mentions the Greeks as a distant nation (iii, 6); in Zech. ix, 13—there is insufficient reason for regarding the words "thy sons of Greece" a later interpolation (see comments)—they appear as a foe with whom Judah may come in conflict at any moment. This would fit the period preceding the Syrian campaign of Alexander, about 333 B.C. It has been suggested, however, that "Greece" in this passage might mean the Syrian empire of the Seleucidæ, which was formed after the death of Alexander, and that the reference might be to the struggles between Judah and the Seleucidæ leading to the Maccabean troubles. "Assyria" (see p. 584) would then be another name for the same power, while Egypt (x, 11) would be the empire of the

Ptolemies. Damascus, Hadrach, and Hamath (ix, 1, 2) might be mentioned as principal cities of the Seleucid empire; the three shepherds (xi, 8) might be three leaders of the foreign armies, cut off in these struggles, or, if the prophecy is brought down late enough, they might be three high priests—Marti suggests Lysimachus, Jason, and Menelaus—cut off in the troublesome days connected with the Maccabean uprisings. Everything seems to work out beautifully, and yet one must never forget that conjecture plays a large part in these attempts of fixing an exact date. On the basis of ix, 13, we may be justified in assigning at least chapters ix—xi to a date not earlier than 350 B.C., but beyond that we can hardly go with confidence. To bring the chapters down to 160 B.C. would make it difficult to account for their position in the prophetic canon, which was apparently completed in the days of Jesus ben Sirach, about 180 B.C. It would also seem strange that one and the same power should be called both Greece and Assyria. If chapters xii—xiv come from the same author, they must come from the same period; if they are assigned to a different author, their date must remain uncertain, for the data in these three chapters are even less decisive than in ix—xi. If xiv, 1, is dependent on Mal. iv, 6, as has been suggested, though with little probability, the chapters would be later than Malachi, about 450 B.C.

If chapters ix—xiv do not come from the author of chapters i—viii, how is it that at present they form a part of the Book of Zechariah? To this question no entirely satisfactory answer has been found, though the following explanation, which is accepted very widely, has much in its favor. Zech. ix—xi; xii—xiv; Mal. i—iv, have similar titles (compare ix, i; xii, 1; Mal. i, 1). The three sections are thought to have come into the hand of the collector of the Minor Prophets as three separate anonymous writings. He would naturally place them at the end of the collection; in so doing he prefixed to Zech. xii, 1, and Mal. i, 1, titles similar to the one prefixed to Zech. ix, 1, or, some think, he originated all three titles.

Mal. iii, 1, contains the phrase "my messenger," Heb. *Maleākhi,* equivalent to the English *Malachi.* This messenger the collector identified with the author of the book, and understanding the Hebrew form as a proper noun, the name of the author, he made it a part of the title. As a result Malachi came to be regarded as a separate book; the two remaining pieces, still anonymous, in the course of time came to be counted as a part of the preceding book, whose author was given. This may be the correct explanation, but much uncertainty remains.

It is hardly necessary to add that, whatever the date or dates, and whoever the author or authors, the inspiration or authority of Zech. ix—xiv is in no wise affected by the uncertainty. "A moment's reflection," says T. T. Perowne, "will suffice to convince us that it is quite possible to acknowledge unreservedly as an integral part of God's written word, and to reverence accordingly, a book of which the authorship is uncertain or unknown."

Contents and Outline of the Book.

1. *Contents.*—The Book of Zechariah opens with an appeal in which the prophet urges the people to return to Jehovah. He reinforces this appeal by pointing to the experiences of the fathers, who were severely punished when they refused to listen to prophetic exhortations. Disobedience on the part of the present generation may bring to it a similar fate, for the word of Jehovah abides forever (i, 1-6).

About three months after the delivery of the first message there came to the prophet in one single night a series of eight symbolical visions, the significance of which was explained to him by a heavenly interpreter (i, 7—vi, 8). All these visions are linked together by a common purpose, "the encouragement of the Jews to continue the work of restoring the temple, of rebuilding the city, and of reëstablishing the theocratic government." The first vision—the angelic horsemen—is intended to assure the community that, though the shaking

of the nations (Hag. ii, 7, 8), which was to be preliminary to the restoration of the divine grace and mercy to Zion, was still delayed, it will surely come, and Jehovah will return to his city and people with an abundance of mercies (7-17).

On the one hand, the message of the first vision is one of encouragement to the Jews; on the other, one of judgment to the nations. These two aspects are expanded in the second and third visions respectively. The second—the four horns and the four smiths—pictures the judgment upon the nations that have ill-treated the chosen people (18-21). The third—the man with the measuring line—describes the glorious restoration. Jerusalem is to be rebuilt and repopulated, Jehovah will return to live in Zion, and many nations will join themselves to the redeemed community (ii, 1-13).

In the fourth vision—the trial of the high priest—Zechariah sees the high priest Joshua standing before the angel of Jehovah; at his right hand stands the adversary, ready to present accusations against him. After a rebuke is administered to the adversary the angel of Jehovah instructs the servants to take from Joshua the filthy garment with which he is clothed, and to clothe him instead with the rich garments of the high-priestly office, including the miter. Then he instructs Joshua in the duties and responsibilities of the office to which he is restored, and promises him access to the Most High, if he will discharge his duties faithfully. The angel declares also that the high priest and his fellows are a sign of the coming of "Branch," who will remove iniquity from the land in one day and will restore peace and prosperity forever (iii, 1-10).

The experience of the high priest described in these verses was of deep significance to him, but its symbolic meaning is more comprehensive. Since he is the representative of the people before Jehovah, his experiences vitally affect the whole nation; and his purification in the vision symbolizes the moral and spiritual regeneration of the whole people, which must take place if the new community would be in a real sense the people of God.

The fifth vision—the golden candlestick and the two olive trees—is a message of encouragement to Zerubbabel. The prophet sees a golden candlestick with seven lamps; on top it has a reservoir of oil which is connected with the lamps through pipes. Beside it stood two olive trees; from two overhanging branches of these trees oil flowed without interruption to supply the reservoir and the lamps (iv, 1-14). It may be difficult to determine the meaning of every feature of this vision, but its general purpose is clear. "It is intended to encourage Zerubbabel in the work of rebuilding the temple by impressing upon him the truth that, as that candlestick gave forth its light in silent, ceaseless splendor, unfed and untended by human agencies, so the work in which he was engaged" should surely be accomplished through the divine Spirit's coöperation with him. The mountains of difficulty will be brought low, and he will carry his divinely appointed task to completion.

The sixth and seventh visions—the flying roll, and the woman in the ephah—serve similar ends. In the sixth vision the prophet beholds flying through the air an immense roll symbolizing the curse of God upon evil doers of every kind. He is informed that the roll will enter the house of every man and consume it utterly (v, 1-4). The removal of all iniquity is promised in iii, 9; this vision indicates one method by which it is accomplished, the destruction of the wicked. In the seventh vision the prophet sees an ephah, in which sits a woman; upon its mouth is a cover. Two women with wings lift up the ephah and carry it through the air. Upon inquiry he is told that the woman is to be deposited in the land of Shinar (v, 5-11). As the vision unfolds the interpreting angel explains its symbolical meaning. The woman represents wickedness, which is to be removed from the land (iii, 9). She is fastened securely in the ephah, but to reduce the danger of pollution to a minimum she is to be carried to the far-distant Shinar, there to be established forever.

In the eighth and last vision—the four chariots—the prophet

beholds four chariots, drawn by horses of various colors, coming out from between two mountains. They are commissioned to go in different directions throughout the whole earth; the most important mission is intrusted to the chariot going toward the north country (vi, 1-8). The details of the vision are somewhat obscure, but its chief purpose is clear. It is to bring assurance to the prophet that Jehovah is about to execute judgment upon the nations hostile to him and to his people. The "northerner" will suffer most.

With vi, 8, the series of visions comes to an end. In vi, 9ff., the prophet is urged to perform a symbolical act. This act is so closely connected with the preceding visions that it seems best to regard vi, 9-15, a kind of appendix to the visions. Zechariah is instructed to adorn the high priest Joshua with a crown, made of the silver and gold sent by the exiles from Babylon, and to proclaim him as the type of "Branch," who is to carry to completion the building of the temple and is to sit on the throne, and whose fame will be so glorious that people from afar will come and assist in the enterprise (vi, 9-15).

Chapters vii and viii deal with the relative importance of moral and ceremonial requirements. In the fourth year of King Darius, nearly two years after the date mentioned in i, 7, a deputation came to the prophet to inquire whether or not it was still obligatory to observe the fasts instituted in commemoration of events connected with the destruction of Jerusalem (vii, 1-3). In reply the prophet points out that fasting is not an essential element of true religion; it is of value only as a means to an end, and as an expression of heart piety (4-6). He turns the attention of the inquirers to the real requirements of Jehovah, for whose disregard their fathers had brought upon themselves awful judgments. From these experiences of the past the present generation should learn a lesson, lest worse things come upon it (7-14). Reaffirming Jehovah's jealousy for Zion, the prophet then pictures the prosperity and glory in store for Jerusalem (viii, 1-17). When

that time arrives the question of fasts will solve itself; they will be transformed into seasons of festivity, to which multitudes will gather from all parts of the land; even foreign nations will gladly and anxiously join themselves to the Jews in their felicity (18-23).

With ix, 1, begins the second main division of the Book of Zechariah (chapters ix—xiv), consisting of several utterances, which are only loosely connected, chiefly apocalyptic in character, and all dealing with the events leading up to the final triumph of the kingdom of God.

The section opens with an announcement of judgment upon the nations surrounding Judah; they will perish, while Jerusalem will remain unharmed (ix, 1-8). The judgment is thought of as proceeding from the north or northeast. Syria, represented by Hadrach, Damascus, and Hamath, will suffer first; powerful and proud Phœnicia will come next (1-4); from there the invader will pass down the Maritime Plain and crush Philistia. Its pure-blooded population will be slain or carried into exile; a "bastard" race will take its place, which in time will join the Jews in the worship of the true God (5-7). While these events transpire Jerusalem will rest in safety (8).

The events pictured in verses 1-8 are preparatory to the coming of the Messianic king to Zion, his capital, where he will reign in righteousness and peace (9, 10). The captives in exile at that time will be restored (11, 12); Jehovah will use the restored exiles to confound the hostile nations (13, 14); the struggle will be bloody, but Jehovah will deliver his people and exalt them to glory (15-17).

Chapter x is joined closely to chapter ix by x, 1, 2. Chapter ix, 17, contains a promise of future exaltation; but the prophet, while anticipating the glories of the future, is anxious to transform the present, and in x, 1, 2, he exhorts his contemporaries to turn even now to Jehovah, the giver of every good and perfect gift, for the idols can render no assistance.

The allusion to the "shepherd" in verse 2 prepares the way

for the next oracle (x, 3—xi, 3), which is, however, independent of the preceding verses. "When Israel lost its own shepherds it came under the tyranny of bad shepherds," that is, of representatives of foreign powers, who oppressed the people of Jehovah. These Jehovah will cut off, for he has determined to deliver the oppressed flock (3). Judah and Ephraim will be transformed into mighty men, able to throw off the yoke of the enemy (4-7). Jehovah will bring the exiles from Egypt and Assyria, and, while the latter will be humiliated, the restored community will live in prosperity and felicity (8-12). Then the chosen people will rejoice in their own glorification, while the humiliated hostile powers will wail and lament over their utter undoing (xi, 1-3).

In xi, 4ff., the prophet takes a look into the past. In the form of an allegory he describes Jehovah's dealings with his people, the ingratitude of the latter, his wrath and the resulting judgment. Jehovah appointed a good shepherd to give loving care and protection to the flock of slaughter, which Jehovah had determined to deliver from its oppressors (4-6); but the flock was so unappreciative (7, 8) that finally the shepherd decided to discontinue his shepherding care (9-14). The result was disastrous, for Jehovah gave the flock into the hands of a foolish shepherd, who not only neglected the sheep but abused and destroyed them to satisfy his own lust (15, 16). This condition, the prophet declares, will not continue forever; the foolish shepherd will be slain, and though a large part of the flock will be cut off as punishment for the treatment accorded to the good shepherd, one third will be preserved, purified, and restored to Jehovah's favor (xi, 17; xiii, 7-9).

A new beginning is made with xii, 1. The remaining portion of the book falls naturally into two parts: xii, 1—xiii, 6, and xiv, 1-21. The former falls naturally into three divisions: xii, 1-9; xii, 10-14; xiii, 1-6. The first of these pictures a marvelous deliverance of Judah and Jerusalem. The prophet beholds the nations of the earth gathered around Jerusalem to besiege it; Jehovah smites them with terror; when the chief-

tains of Judah see the panic and recognize that Jehovah is fighting for the capital, they rise against the enemies and overwhelm them completely. Jehovah saves the "tents of Judah" first, to prevent the inhabitants of Jerusalem from magnifying themselves over those living outside the city, but Jerusalem also is gloriously saved (1-9).

The blessings vouchsafed in xii, 1-9, are purely temporal and physical. From the triumph in battle the prophet turns to the spiritual blessings that will be the possession of the people of God; but in order to enjoy these fully they must pass through a process of spiritual preparation. When they become fully conscious of the depth of the divine mercy manifesting itself in the wonderful deliverance described in verses 1-9, they will be seized by a heartfelt sorrow for all past sins, and in deep humility they will prostrate themselves before Jehovah (10-14).

The penitential mourning and supplication will not be in vain. Jehovah will remove all sin and uncleanness and will work a complete moral and spiritual transformation in the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem. A life of intimate fellowship with God will follow, and everything that in any way might hinder the most direct fellowship with him will be swept away; even prophecy as a distinct office will be removed (xiii, 1-6).

In chapter xiv the prophet pictures a new conflict between Jerusalem and the nations. In xii, 1-9, the nations are described as being smitten before they can capture the city; here "the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity" (1, 2). Only when these things have happened will Jehovah appear to save a remnant and to set up his kingdom (3-7). From Jerusalem will go forth two streams of living water, which will cover the whole land with blessing and fertility (8-11). The nations that have warred against Jerusalem will be smitten, and the treasures of their camp will fall into the hands of the Jews (12-15). Those who

escape will turn to Jehovah (16); any who fail to do him proper homage will be smitten with drought (17-19), but Judah and Jerusalem with their inhabitants and their possessions will be "holy unto Jehovah" (20, 21).

2. *Outline.*—

I. Messages of exhortation, of consolation, and of encouragement to the contemporaries of Zechariah, Chaps. i, 1—viii, 23
  1. Call to repentance.....i, 1-6
  2. Eight night visions.....i, 7—vi, 8
    (1) The angelic horsemen.....i, 7-17
    (2) The four horns and the four smiths...i, 18-21
    (3) The man with the measuring line.....ii, 1-13
    (4) Trial and acquittal of the high priest Joshua, ...iii, 1-10
    (5) The golden candlestick and the two olive trees, ...iv, 1-14
    (6) The flying roll.....v, 1-4
    (7) The woman in the ephah.....v, 5-11
    (8) The four chariots with horses of different colors.....vi, 1-8
  3. The symbolic crowning of the high priest Joshua, vi, 9-15
  4. The relative importance of moral and ceremonial requirements.....vii, 1—viii, 23
    (1) Occasion of the prophetic utterance....vii, 1-3
    (2) Fasting not an essential element of true religion.....vii, 4-6
    (3) The true requirements of Jehovah—Disregard of them is always followed by severe punishment.....vii, 7-14
    (4) The time of redemption is at hand....viii, 1-8
    (5) Message of encouragement and admonition... .....viii, 9-17
    (6) Fasting to be changed into rejoicing, viii, 18-23

II. The final triumph of the kingdom of God.....ix, 1—xiv, 21
  1. Oracles dealing with the establishment of the new theocracy.....ix, 1—xi, 17; xiii, 7-9
    (1) Judgment upon the surrounding nations; preservation of Jerusalem.....ix, 1-8
    (2) The Messianic king and his reign....ix, 9, 10
    (3) Deliverance and exaltation of the Jews..... .....ix, 11-17
    (4) Exhortation to return to Jehovah.....x, 1, 2

(5) Restoration of the Jews and overthrow of the hostile nations.....x, 3—xi, 3
(a) Rejuvenation of Ephraim and Judah, ...x, 3-7
(b) Restoration of the exiles from Assyria and Egypt.....x, 8-12
(c) Lamentation of the humiliated enemies.....xi, 1-3
(6) Allegory of the good shepherd.....xi, 4-14
(a) The shepherd's loving care....xi, 4-6
(b) The people's lack of appreciation... .....xi, 7, 8
(c) Withdrawal of the good shepherd.. .....xi, 9-14
(7) Allegory of the foolish shepherd..... .....xi, 15-17; xiii, 7-9
(a) Conduct of the foolish shepherd..... .....xi, 15, 16
(b) Overthrow of the foolish shepherd.. .....xi, 17
(c) Fate of the shepherd's flock..xiii, 7-9
2. Various utterances concerning the future of Israel..... .....xii, 1—xiv, 21 (exc. xiii, 7-9)
(1) Marvelous deliverance of Judah and Jerusalem.....xii, 1-9
(2) Penitential mourning and supplication..... .....xii, 10-14
(3) Purification of Jerusalem; removal of all hindrances to direct communion with God... .....xiii, 1-6
(4) Final conflict and triumph of the kingdom of God.....xiv, 1-21
(a) Capture of Jerusalem and its deliverance.....xiv, 1-5
(b) The day of Jehovah.....xiv, 6, 7
(c) Fertility and felicity of the whole land.....xiv, 8-11
(d) Destruction of the hostile nations.... .....xiv, 12-15
(e) Conversion of a remnant of the nations.....xiv, 16-19
(f) Judah and Jerusalem holy unto Jehovah.....xiv, 20, 21

Teaching of the Book.

For the sake of convenience and clearness the two great divisions, chapters i—viii and chapters ix—xiv, may be considered separately:

I. *Chapters I—VIII.*—1. Zechariah differs widely from the great prophets who preceded him, in three points: (1) In the emphasis which he places upon visions as a means of divine communication; (2) in the apocalyptic symbolism which enters into the visions; (3) in the large place occupied by *angelic mediation* in his intercourse with Jehovah. The first two concern chiefly the *form* of revelation, only the last may be considered an element of his teaching. In the Book of Zechariah we have in embryo some of the ideas which are found in a fuller stage of development in the later Jewish and in the New Testament angelology. Here we meet also the beginning of the tendency so widespread in the later Judaism, which considered Jehovah too sacred to come into direct contact with human beings and removed him so far away from man that direct communion with him came to be thought of as almost impossible. Even prophecy seems to have lost in a measure its sense of immediate communion with God. The prophet receives his instruction through an angel, who acts as intermediary, interpreter, and guide. Angels appear in the unfolding of the visions, they carry forward the events symbolized, and they are active participants in the working out of human history. Here also is used for the first time in prophecy the noun "Satan." With Zechariah the word is not yet a proper name; a literal reproduction of the phrase in iii, 1, is "the adversary" (see margin), it becomes a proper noun only in 1 Chron. xxi, 1; but "the adversary" of Zechariah is closely related to "the adversary" who plays such important part in the prologue to the Book of Job, to "Satan" —now a proper name—in 1 Chron. xxi, 1, and to the New Testament Satan.

2. Worthy of note is also the unique place which *the temple* occupies in the thought of the prophet. From beginning

to end Zechariah pleads for the rebuilding of the house of Jehovah, and his sublimest promises center around the completed temple. With him the rebuilding of the dwelling place of Jehovah is an indispensable condition of the arrival of the Messianic era. "As the commencement of the judgment formerly showed itself when the glory of Jehovah was seen by Ezekiel (Ezek. x) to forsake the temple, so upon the day when Jehovah once more makes his abode with his people all the distress of the time shall come to an end; in short, this dwelling of Jehovah in the temple is the *sine qua non* of the dawn of the Messianic age." This high estimation of the temple and the priesthood, and so of the externals of religion, is not the outgrowth of lower spiritual conceptions, but rather of a clear appreciation of the needs of the hour. The Jews had not yet reached the stage of religious and spiritual development when they could afford to discard forms and symbols; they needed the temple as a symbol of the presence of Jehovah. Besides, in an age when religion was the only bond that united the heterogeneous elements in the postexilic community, it was needed as a common place of worship. Continued existence without a temple would have resulted, humanly speaking, in the loss of true religion to the world. The fullness of time, when people would worship Jehovah "neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem," but everywhere in spirit and in truth, had not yet arrived.

3. Of importance are also the *Messianic hopes* of Zechariah. The temple plays a prominent part, but only as an earnest of better things to come; the high priest and his fellows receive honor, but only as a sign of one greater than they, of "Branch." Around the person of this Branch center the Messianic hopes of Zechariah. It is he who shall complete the building of the temple, who shall have constant access to Jehovah, who shall reign in peace forever. The prophet identifies this "Branch" with Zerubbabel (iv, 7); in his person, therefore, a descendant of David comes once more to the front, destined to occupy a prominent place in the kingdom of God. The blessings of

the Messianic age will be both temporal (for example, i, 17; ii, 4, 5) and spiritual (for example, ii, 10; iii, 9); they will be enjoyed primarily by the Jews, but not by them exclusively. True, some of the nations are destined to be "a spoil to those that served them," but the prophet anticipates also the conversion of the nations: "And many nations shall join themselves to Jehovah in that day, and shall be my people" (ii, 11).

4. Zechariah has been accused of being the teacher of a heartless and unspiritual formalism. An unbiased study of his prophecies proves this accusation to be false, for he teaches plainly that forms and ceremonies are not essential elements of true religion (compare vii, viii). His *conception of the requirements of Jehovah* is indicated in these words: "Speak ye every man the truth with his neighbor; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates; and let none of you devise evil in your hearts against his neighbor; and love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith Jehovah" (viii, 16, 17). He values forms and ceremonies only as means of grace, by the use of which men may be led into purer and nobler lives. His conception of the Messianic age includes the removal of sin from the land and from the people (chapters iii and v). The people, the city, the land, all must be holy, not only in a ceremonial but in an ethical sense as well, in order to enjoy the presence of Jehovah and become partakers in his blessing.

5. Another truth constantly emphasized by Zechariah is that *the ultimate triumph is dependent on the divine co-operation.* "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith Jehovah of hosts" (iv, 6). These words have reference primarily to the rebuilding of the temple, but the same thought pervades the prophecy from beginning to end. Only as Jehovah gives his support can the people be restored to their own land, there to live in joy and felicity forever.

II. *Chapters IX—XIV.*—The teaching of these chapters differs materially from that of chapters i—viii. The angels disappear entirely; in chapters i—viii the interest centers

around the building of the temple and the restored community during the latter part of the sixth century, in chapters ix—xiv the interest centers around other things. Differences may be noted also in the Messianic ideas and ideals of the two sections (compare iii, 8; vi, 12, 13, with ix, 9, 10; chapter viii with chapter xiv) as well as in the picture of the nation's future (compare i, 21; ii, 8-11; viii, 7, 8, with xii, 2ff.; xiv, 1ff.). The last-named differences arise largely from the fact that while the prophecies in i—viii are closely connected with the conditions of the Jewish community during the reign of Darius, and aim to meet the needs of that day, the utterances in ix—xiv cut themselves loose from these conditions, and to a large extent from all present historical surroundings—though there can be no doubt that historical events form the background of the prophet's picture—and deal almost exclusively with the consummation of the kingdom of God "in that day," and with the events leading up to the same. The entire section is essentially apocalyptic and eschatological.

We may follow Kirkpatrick in grouping the distinctive teaching of chapters ix—xiv around four topics, even though we may be compelled to reject, in some cases, his interpretation. These topics are: 1. The Messianic king; 2. the rejected shepherd; 3. the restored and penitent people; 4. the divine sovereignty.

1. *The Messianic King.* The person of the Messianic king appears only in ix, 9, 10, but there very distinctly. The low estimate which Nowack places upon this passage is not warranted. "The Messianic king," says he, "still appears, it is true, in ix, 9f., but he is a comparatively otiose figure which might be left out without damaging the connection. He is no longer the leader in the conflict against enemies, but exclusively Prince of Peace, with an extremely passive character. The conception of the final king had at this time assumed a pale cast, that it might be able to take on other colors, namely, those of priest and prophet." That the verses might be omitted without damaging the connection is no more true of

this passage than of other Messianic passages scattered throughout the Old Testament, and, in fact, of hundreds of non-Messianic passages. True, he is the prince of peace rather than the leader in conflict, but that is true of the great Messianic picture in Isa. ix, 1-7, as well as of other Messianic utterances of less importance. Again, it is not quite true that the king assumes a "pale cast"; the description is quite vivid, and in some respects the conception of ix, 9, 10, is in perfect accord with that found in other prophetic books. He is righteous and peaceful, and his sovereignty will be recognized throughout the whole land. However, two new features are introduced, "having salvation, lowly." The meaning of the former term may be somewhat uncertain (see comment on ix, 9), not so the other; its thought is found in an expanded form in Isa. liii, and it receives a new significance when studied in the light of the life and sufferings of Jesus the Christ.

2. *The Rejected Shepherd.* In general it may be said that *shepherd* in these chapters is equivalent to *ruler,* but in different parts of the section the term is applied to different persons of different characters. The passage demanding special consideration is xi, 4-14, and perhaps xi, 15-17 + xiii, 7-9. In the former passage Jehovah is represented as commanding the prophet to take charge of his oppressed flock, to guard and protect it; but, finding himself unable to carry out his gracious purpose, he finally decides to abandon the flock. A foolish shepherd takes his place, who neglects and ill-treats the flock; but he is to be cut off by Jehovah. Notwithstanding all that has been said to the contrary, it seems best to interpret xiii, 7-9, as describing the fate of the foolish shepherd and of his flock (see comments); and yet the passage still implies that the good shepherd was cruelly rejected, and xii, 10, which alludes to the fate of the good shepherd (see comments), calls his rejection a "piercing" of Jehovah.

What is the teaching of this allegory? Undoubtedly the prophet has in mind prophecies like Jer. xxiii, 1-8; Ezek.

xxxiv; xxxvii, 24ff., which connect the raising up of the good shepherd with the Messianic era of the future; at the same time, it is quite certain that the passage in Zechariah does not point to the future, but describes Jehovah's dealings with Israel in the past; only xi, 17 + xiii, 7-9, point to the future. Consequently, the rejection of the good shepherd cannot be made a direct prophecy of the rejection of Jesus, though it may be regarded as a type of his rejection, just as the good shepherd himself is a type of the good shepherd of John x. The allegory contains a most solemn warning how the divine care and grace may be frustrated by human obstinacy. It has been done again and again in the past, it has been done in the immediate past to which the prophecy points; it may occur again, unless the prophet's contemporaries take heed. The promises in chapters ix, x are glorious. Will they be realized? All will depend upon the attitude of those for whom the blessings are intended. The sublime and spiritual fulfillment of the promises was ushered in by Jesus (see at close of Mic. v), and in carrying out his plan and purpose he suffered a rejection more bitter than that suffered by the good shepherd of this prophecy; and even in this day the allegory stands as a warning describing the far-reaching effects of human obstinacy.

3. *The Restored and Penitent People.* As is the case with other Old Testament prophets, the eschatological hopes of the author of chapters ix—xiv center around the restored Jewish community. Some prophets give a more prominent place to the temporal aspects of the future glory, others to the spiritual aspects; some give equal prominence to both, implying at the same time that the temporal prosperity can be enjoyed in the fullest measure only after a spiritual regeneration has taken place and Jehovah has reëstablished himself in the midst of his people. To the last class belongs the author of these chapters. Chapters ix, x promise the restoration and reunion of Judah and Ephraim under the rule of the Messianic king, and the triumph of the reunited nation over all enemies.

Chapter xi, 1-3, continues this thought. The rest of the chapter sounds a warning; these triumphs can be theirs only on certain conditions; their rebellious attitude has frequently robbed them of Jehovah's favor; it may do so again, and instead of immediate salvation additional judgment will be their fate (xiii, 7-9). Chapter xii, 1-9, and chapter xiv, 1-15, announce that these judgments will fall upon the community; at the same time, they promise that in the end the Jews will triumph over all their enemies and enjoy abundant temporal prosperity. The pictures in these chapters differ from those employed in chapters ix, x. Jerusalem is the center; against her the nations gather for a final onslaught. According to xii, 2ff., the destructive blow will fall upon them before they can take the city; according to xiv, 1ff., the city will meet temporary defeat; then Jehovah will appear, the nations will be completely routed, and their wealth will fall into the hands of the Jews. In both cases final triumph is assured.

However, this triumph and the resulting temporal prosperity is only one phase of the eschatological hope of the author; xii, 10—xiii, 6, 9; xiv, 20, 21, present the other side. Rich spiritual blessings await the redeemed remnant. Uncleanness, even the spirit of uncleanness (see on xiii, 2), will be taken away; so also everything that in any way might hinder direct personal communion with Jehovah. The transformation will be so complete that both men and things in Judah and Jerusalem will be holy unto Jehovah. That ceremonial holiness should occupy a prominent place in these pictures cannot appear strange when we remember that all postexilic prophecy lays great stress upon the externals of religion, but in justice to the author we should not forget that he is not content with external cleansing. Chapter xiii, 1ff., implies a great moral and spiritual regeneration; and the emphasis which he places upon heartfelt repentance (xii, 10-14) is evidence enough to show that this author, like the prëexilic prophets, has a clear apprehension of the essentials of true Jehovah religion and of the divine plan of redemption.

4. *The Divine Sovereignty.* The author of chapters ix—xiv is not behind the prophet Zechariah in recognizing that during the Messianic era Jehovah will be King of all the nations. True, Jerusalem and Judah will enjoy in a special manner the divine favor; true, the nations will suffer terrible disasters; but when the last conflict is over, a remnant of the nations will "worship the King, Jehovah of hosts" (xiv, 16-19). Jehovah will rule in the midst of his people, with Jerusalem as the center of his realm, and unto this center many nations will come, saying, "He will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths. for out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem."

ZECHARIAH.

CHAPTER I.

IN the eighth month, [a]in the second year of Darius, came the word of the LORD [b]unto Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet, saying, 2 The LORD hath been [1]sore displeased with your fathers. 3 Therefore say thou unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Turn [c]ye unto me, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. 4 Be ye

[a] Ezra 4. 24; Hag. 1. 1.—[b] Ezra 5. 1; Matt. 23. 35.—[1] Heb. *with displeasure.*

[c] Jer. 25. 5; 35. 15; Mic. 7. 19; Mal. 3. 7; Luke 15. 20; James 4. 8.

CHAPTER I.

1. *The title.* **Eighth month**—Called before the exile *Bul* (1 Kings vi, 38); after the exile, by the Babylonian name *Marcheshvan.* It corresponds to the latter part of October and the early part of November. **Second year of Darius**—See on Hag. i, 1. Zechariah delivered his first message about two months after Haggai's first appearance. The day of the month is not given; some have thought that it has dropped out accidentally, which may be possible; but it is by no means certain that it was there originally. **Zechariah**—See Introduction, p. 571. **Son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo**—See Introduction, p. 571 (compare Ezra v, 1; vi, 14). **The prophet**—Refers to Zechariah, not to Iddo.

CALL TO REPENTANCE, 2–6.

In these verses Zechariah urges his contemporaries to return to Jehovah, in order that they may enjoy once more the divine favor. He reinforces this exhortation by an appeal to the experiences of their ancestors, who suffered severe punishments because they disregarded the teaching of the prophets. The disobedience of the present generation may be followed by a similar catastrophe.

2. At the beginning of his message the prophet places the statement that Jehovah was angry with the fathers. **Sore displeased**—Literally, *angry with anger.* This should serve as a warning to the present generation.

3. Instead of proceeding directly to his message, he introduces Jehovah as commissioning him to issue the call to repentance. **Therefore**—Because Jehovah was displeased with the fathers and had withdrawn from them (compare Hos. v, 15). He has not yet returned to the people, but is anxious to do so; therefore he commissions Zechariah to urge the people to do their share in the matter. **Unto them**—The contemporaries of the prophet. **Thus saith Jehovah**—Repeated three times in one verse; Haggai also repeats the phrase again and again (for example, Hag. i, 4). **Jehovah of hosts**—See on Hos. xii, 5. **Turn ye** ["Return"] **unto me**—See on Joel ii, 12. In this case the "return" was to show itself in the resumption of building operations on the temple (Hag. i, 3, 4, 9). **I will turn** ["return"]—The sufferings of the present, such as the famine (Hag. i, 6) and the opposition of the surrounding tribes, were an indication that Jehovah had not yet returned to his people in loving-kindness and mercy. He promises, however, that if they will do their duty he will once more shower his blessings upon them.

4–6. Similar appeals were made to former generations, but they would

not as your fathers, [d]unto whom the former prophets have cried, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; [e]Turn ye now from your evil ways, and *from* your evil doings: but they did not hear, nor hearken unto me, saith the LORD. 5 Your fathers, where *are* they? and the prophets, do they live for ever? 6 But [f]my words and my statutes, which I commanded my servants the prophets, did they not [2]take hold of your fathers? and they returned and said, [g]Like as the LORD of hosts thought to do unto us, according to our ways, and according to our doings, so hath he dealt with us.

7 Upon the four and twentieth

[d] 2; Chron. 36. 15, 16.—[e] Isa. 31. 6; Jer. 3. 12; 18. 11; Ezek. 18. 30; Hos. 14. 1.

[f] Isa. 55. 1.—[2] Or, *overtake*.—[g] Lam. 1. 18; 2. 17.

not heed; therefore they were cut off. **The former prophets**—All the predecessors of Zechariah. They all with one accord urged the people to hate the evil and love the good. It is not necessary to suppose that the prophet has in mind any particular prophet or any particular utterance (compare Hos. xiv, 2; Ezek. xxxiii, 11; 2 Kings xvii, 13; Amos v, 14). The fathers did not hearken, and judgment overtook them. **Where are they? . . . do they live forever?**—The fathers are dead and even the prophets have passed away, but the words which the latter spoke and the former neglected proved true, for the threatened destruction came. **Words**—Especially of threatening (Jer. xxxix, 16; Ezek. xii, 28). **Statutes**—Not a legal term as in Mal. iv, 4, but practically identical with the preceding "word"; the judicial decrees of Jehovah proclaimed by the prophets. **My servants the prophets**—The "former prophets" (verse 4). The prophets are frequently called the servants of God or of Jehovah, because it was their office to execute the purpose of their divine Master. **Take hold of** ["overtake"]—"The judgments decreed by Jehovah resemble messengers sent out by Jehovah to pursue and destroy the sinners" (Deut. xxviii, 15, 45). The climax was the exile. **They returned**—Though the judgments did not produce a complete change of heart, they did open the eyes of the people so that they recognized that they were sent by Jehovah in punishment for their own sins (Lam. ii, 17; Ezra ix, 5ff.). The experience of the fathers should teach a lesson to the children.

THE EIGHT NIGHT VISIONS, i, 7–vi, 8.

About three months after Zechariah's first utterance and five months after building operations on the temple were resumed (Hag. i, 15) there came to Zechariah in one single night a series of symbolical visions. Their significance was made plain to him by a heavenly interpreter. The visions have one common purpose, "the encouragement of the Jews to continue the work of restoring the temple and rebuilding the city and the reëstablishing of the theocratic government."

The first vision—the angelic horsemen, 7–17.

Zechariah beholds "a man riding upon a red horse" standing among myrtle trees (7, 8); he is accompanied by other horsemen who report that they have "walked to and fro through the earth, and, behold, all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest" (9–11). Since a "shaking" of the nations must precede the establishment of the kingdom of God (Hag. ii, 6, 7; 21, 22), the report meant that there was no sign of the approach of the Messianic era. This is a disappointment to the angel who receives the report, and he inquires of Jehovah, "how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah?" (12). To which Jehovah replies that, though the shaking may be delayed, his cities "shall yet overflow with prosperity; and Jehovah shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem" (13–17).

The vision, therefore, is a message of encouragement to the despondent people to retain faith in Jehovah, for

day of the eleventh month, which *is* the month Sebat, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the LORD unto Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet, saying, 8 I saw by night, and behold [h]a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle trees that *were* in the bottom; and behind him *were there* [i]red horses, [3]speckled, and white. 9 Then said I, O my lord, what *are*

[h] Josh. 5. 13; Rev. 6. 4.

[i] Chap. 6. 2–7.—[3] Or, *bay*.

he will surely fulfill the Messianic promises of the past.

Verse 7 gives the date of the vision. **Eleventh month**—Called *Shebat* (see R. V.); it corresponds to the latter part of January and the first part of February. The rest of verse 7 is identical with verse 1 (see there).

8. **I saw**—In a vision or trance (compare Isa. vi), one of the means by which God communicated his truth to the prophets (compare Num. xii, 6; see on Amos vii, 1; Nah. i, 1). **By night**—Visions usually came during the night (1 Sam. iii, 3; 1 Kings iii, 5; Acts xvi, 9). Since the Hebrew day began at sunset, this was probably during the night preceding the twenty-fourth day. **Behold**—Calls attention to the first object that met his eye. The following appear as *dramatis personæ* in the first vision: 1. The prophet; 2. The interpreting angel, who is present in all the visions; 3. The man riding upon the red horse; 4. The men riding upon the red, speckled, and white horses; 5. The angel of Jehovah; 6. Jehovah himself. **A man riding upon a red horse**—This was the first being observed by the prophet, but the man was not alone, he was followed by a group of horsemen. **Among the myrtle trees**—The leader stopped in a grove of myrtle trees, because there was the one to whom the report had to be given. The fact that "the angel of Jehovah" also was among the myrtle trees is no reason for identifying the two; the latter was there first, the former stopped because the report was intended for the angel. LXX. reads wrongly, "between the mountains" (compare vi, 1). That myrtles grew near Jerusalem is shown by Neh. viii, 15, where it is said that myrtle branches were gathered for the feast of tabernacles. **In the bottom**—The meaning of the last word is somewhat obscure; various translations have been suggested; margin R. V., "shady place"; but the common rendering is to be preferred. The reference is probably to some valley at the foot of the temple hill, in which was a myrtle grove, well known to the contemporaries of the prophet, though the spot cannot be identified to-day. Attempts have been made to assign symbolical meanings to the myrtle trees and to the bottom. Keil, for example, considers the former a "symbol of the theocracy, or of the land of Judah as a land that was dear and lovely in the esteem of the Lord"; of the latter he says that it "can be only a figurative representation of the deep degradation into which the land and the people of God had fallen at that time." Since the heavenly interpreter gives no symbolical meaning to these features, his earthly counterparts may do well to follow his example; it seems best to consider these elements mere incidents in the picture, without special symbolical significance. **Red . . . speckled . . . white**—For the second R. V. reads "sorrel." The meaning of the Hebrew so translated is uncertain; the corresponding Arabic word is used of *chestnut* or *bay* horses, and this is the meaning which should probably be given to the Hebrew. Chapter vi, 3, and Rev. vi, 8, to which appeal has been made by some, are of no assistance in determining the meaning, since there is no close connection between them and this passage. Whatever may be true of other passages, here the colors are without symbolic meaning; they are only incidents introduced to make the picture complete.

9. The prophet, who does not under-

these? And the angel that talked with me said unto me, I will show thee what these *be.* **10** And the man that stood among the myrtle trees answered and said, [k]These *are* *they* whom the LORD hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth. **11** [l]And they answered the angel of the LORD that stood among the myrtle trees, and said, We have

[k] Heb. 1. 14.

[l] Psa. 103. 20, 21.

stand the vision (compare Amos vii, 1–9), seeks an explanation. **O my lord**—The one here addressed must be the person who replies, the heavenly interpreter. **The angel that talked with me**—He is the constant companion of the prophet throughout the entire series of visions; his office is to interpret to Zechariah what he sees and hears (verses 9, 13, 14, 19; ii, 3; iv, 1, 4, 5; v, 10; vi, 4; see Introduction, p. 599). **I will show thee**—The angel does not promise a direct answer, but assures the prophet that an explanation will be given.

10. This explanation is supplied by the further unfolding of the vision. The man among the myrtles (verse 8) is the first to speak. **Answered**—The Hebrew verb does not mean necessarily to *reply to a question,* sometimes it is used in the sense of *begin to speak;* so here. The words are not intended as a reply to Zechariah; they are addressed to the "angel of Jehovah" (verse 11), to whom the man presents his followers, that they may report the result of their investigations. The prophet, as an interested bystander, could learn the significance of the vision from this report and from the dialogue which took place subsequently between the angel and Jehovah. **These**—The men upon the horses of different colors, who are introduced as messengers of Jehovah, commissioned to "walk to and fro through the earth." Their duty seems to have been purely to find out conditions and report on them; there is no indication that they were to interfere in any way with "terrestrial matters."

11. Having been presented, the horsemen make their report; whether through a spokesman or in unison is not stated. **The angel of Jehovah**—Not to be identified with "man" in verses 8, 10. The angel is the one who receives the report of the horsemen, of whom the "man" is the leader. Any angel might be called "angel of Jehovah" (1 Kings xix, 7; 2 Sam. xxiv, 16), but there are passages in the Old Testament in which the phrase has a peculiar meaning (Gen. xxxi, 11–13; Exod. xxiii, 20, 21, etc.). To the latter class belongs this verse. In these passages the "angel of Jehovah" is "not a created angel; he is Jehovah himself," manifesting himself *without* men, that is, in the external affairs of men, just as in the Old Testament "spirit of Jehovah" is Jehovah manifesting himself *within* men (compare A. B. Davidson, *The Theology of the Old Testament,* pp. 296ff.). Nowack, on the basis of verse 12, thinks that this verse marks an advance over the more ancient passages, because here the angel is no longer identified with Jehovah, but is separate from and subordinate to him; and there is much to be said in favor of this view, but the testimony of verse 12 is not conclusive (see comment). Whether the ancients ever considered the metaphysical aspects of this "incarnation," and if so, what were their exact notions, we cannot determine, nor can we speak dogmatically about the connection between this manifestation of Jehovah and the divine incarnation in the person of Jesus. The suggestion of some commentators, that in this passage the "angel of Jehovah" is identical with the "man among the myrtle trees," that the title "angel of Jehovah" is a later addition due to a confusion of the man with the interpreting angel, and that the original was "the man," is intended to remove a difficulty, but

walked to and fro through the earth, and, behold, all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest.

12 Then the angel of the LORD answered and said, [m]O LORD of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation [n]these threescore and ten years? 13 And the LORD answered the angel that talked with me *with* [o]good words *and*

[m] Psa. 102. 13; Rev. 6. 10.——[n] Jer. 25. 11, 12; Dan. 9. 2; chap. 7. 5.——[o] Jer. 29. 10.

the change is not warranted. **The earth sitteth still and is at rest**—The horsemen report that all is peaceful, undisturbed by war or revolution. Evidently an allusion to Hag. ii, 6, 7, 21, 22, or at least to the hope expressed there. The expectation was that Jehovah would "shake the nations" preliminary to the restoration of his grace and mercy to Zion. The people expected a speedy fulfillment of the Messianic promise; the delay produced despondency. The report of the horsemen would intensify the feeling of disappointment, for while peace and quietness prevailed the former promises would not be fulfilled.

12. The purpose of the vision is to remove this sense of disappointment and despondency by a solemn reaffirmation of the promises of the past (12–17). It is the angel of Jehovah (see on verse 11) who intercedes with Jehovah for Jerusalem and Judah. The fact that the *angel* intercedes with Jehovah might be urged against the identification of the two (see above); but this representation, which is figurative, disproves the identification no more "than the intercessory prayer of Christ in John xvii is a disproof of his divinity." **Answered**—See on verse 10. The "angel" understands the true significance of the report, and he inquires why Jehovah is withholding his favor, when the allotted time of his displeasure has come to an end. **Threescore and ten years**—Undoubtedly a reference to Jer. xxv, 12; xxix, 10. The former passage was uttered in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, about 604 B. C.; seventy years from that date would bring us to about 534, a few years subsequent to the edict of Cyrus granting permission to the Jews to return from Babylon, and about fourteen years before the date of this vision. If this is the period meant the disappointment can be understood very easily. The preëxilic prophets had connected the sublimest hopes with the return, but the years immediately following the return of 537 were years of depression and oppression. Many would ask and did ask, What has become of the promises of Jehovah? The angel simply voices the sentiment of the majority in the community. However, it is possible that the beginning of the seventy years should be placed at the destruction of the temple in 586; seventy years from that date would bring us to about 516. As the latter date approached the people would inquire anxiously whether the promised exaltation would materialize. The former interpretation does justice to the primary reference, but the fact that seventy years from the destruction of the temple were about to expire may have intensified the expectation as well as the disappointment.

13. **Jehovah answered**—Jehovah is to be identified with Jehovah of hosts (12). The fact that the reply disregards entirely the angel of Jehovah favors the identification of the two (compare Gen. xxxi, 11, 13; Josh. v, 13; vi, 2). The reply is addressed to the interpreting angel (see on verse 9). **Good . . . comfortable**—Though the contents of the divine answer had to be explained by the angel, the prophet seems to have understood from the beginning that the message was one of cheer. *Good*—promising good, salutary (Jer. xxix, 10); *comfortable*, literally, *consolations*, so called because they were intended to cheer the drooping spirit of the prophet and the community.

comfortable words. 14 So the angel that communed with me said unto me, Cry thou, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; I am [p]jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy. 15 And I am very sore displeased with the heathen *that are* at ease: for [q]I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction. 16 Therefore thus saith the LORD; [r]I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies: my house shall be built in it, saith the LORD of hosts, and [s]a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem. 17 Cry yet, saying, Thus saith the

[p] Joel 2. 18; chap. 8. 2.——[q] Isa. 47. 6.

[r] Isa. 12. 1; 54. 8; chaps. 2. 10; 8. 3.——[s] Chap. 2. 1, 2.

14–17. The interpreting angel joins to the interpretation an exhortation to make the message known to all the people. **Cry thou**—So that all may hear (compare verse 4). **Thus saith Jehovah**—The present announcement is the word of Jehovah as much as the preëxilic prophecies. **I am jealous . . . with a great jealousy**—See on Joel ii, 18. The intensity of the divine emotion is indicated by the addition "with a great jealousy." The Hebrew tense implies the continuity of the divine jealousy. The restoration from exile was an expression of it, and even when there was no external manifestation of it, it was there, and soon it will show itself again.

15. An inevitable concomitant of Jehovah's jealousy for Jerusalem is his wrath against the nations that have ill-treated the former. **Very sore displeased**—A participial construction expressing the idea that the wrath is permanent (compare verse 2). **The heathen that are at ease**—R. V., "the nations." Their continued peace (verse 11) and prosperity have made them self-confident and careless (Isa. xxxvii, 29). **For**—This introduces the reason for the sore displeasure of Jehovah. Though he commissioned them to execute judgment upon his people, they went beyond their commission in severity and cruelty (compare Isa. x, 5–7; xlvii, 6). **A little**—When used adverbially this word is generally an adverb of *time*—a little while. The reference is evidently to the seventy years during which the nations were permitted to execute judgment upon Israel (Isa. liv, 8). This time limit the nations did not observe; they fancied that their success was due to their own wisdom and might; therefore they were planning to continue the oppression even after the time of visitation had expired; but Jehovah will not permit it. Even during the period of judgment they were more cruel than was in accord with the will of Jehovah; therefore his wrath is aroused, and their destruction is determined. **They helped forward the affliction**—Literally, *they helped for evil.* They carried the affliction beyond the divine purpose, so that evil was the result. "They assisted not only as the instruments of God for the chastisement of Judah, but so that harm arose from it, inasmuch as they tried to destroy Israel altogether."

16. **Therefore**—Because Jehovah is jealous for Jerusalem and angry with the nations. **I am returned to Jerusalem**—The tense is to be understood as a *perfect of prophetic certainty.* The return is not yet accomplished. **With mercies**—Or, *compassion.* Not with judgments or wrath as in the past.

16b and 17 describe the consequences of the divine return. **My house shall be built**—So long as the temple remains uncompleted Jehovah can have no *permanent* abiding place in the city. It was completed and dedicated in 516. **A line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem**—Not only the temple but the city also will be rebuilt. The *line* is the *measuring line* which is used to mark off the space on which the city is to stand, and the plan according to which it is to be built (ii, 2; Jer. xxxi, 39). But the blessing will not stop with the rebuilding of the city; the whole land will feel the benefits of Jehovah's re-

LORD of hosts; My cities through [4]prosperity shall yet be spread abroad; [t]and the LORD shall yet comfort Zion, and [u]shall yet choose Jerusalem.

18 Then lifted I up mine eyes,

[4] Heb. *good.*—[t] Isa. 51. 3.—[u] Isa. 14. 1;

turn to Zion. **Cry yet**—R. V. adds "again." A new phase of the divine blessing is to be announced. **My cities**—The cities scattered throughout the land of Jehovah, that is, through Judah. **Through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad**—P. V., "shall yet overflow with prosperity." The latter is to be preferred. The verb occurs with the same meaning in Prov. v, 16 (not so in Zech. xiii, 7). At present there is distress everywhere; but when Jehovah returns to his own all will be prosperity (Jer. xxxiii, 12, 13). 17b returns to Jerusalem; it will be the center of the divine government in the period of restoration. There is no ground for despair; Jehovah will yet *comfort* Zion (see on verse 13); LXX. seems to have read a different verb, "will have mercy." **Choose**—As his royal residence (compare ii, 12; iii, 2).

The second vision—the four horns and the four smiths, i, 18–21 (in Hebrew, ii, 1–4).

In the second vision the prophet beholds four horns. Upon inquiry he is told by his companion that these horns symbolize the nations that have scattered the Jews. He also sees four smiths, who, he is informed, represent the divinely appointed agents to execute judgment upon the hostile nations. The first vision announces, on the one hand, the return of Jehovah to Zion; on the other, the divine wrath against the nations. These two aspects of the first vision are expanded in visions two and three respectively. The second pictures the execution of judgment upon Israel's enemies; the third, the blessings to be enjoyed by Jerusalem and Judah.

18. **Then lifted I up mine eyes**—In-

and saw, and behold four horns. 19 And I said unto the angel that talked with me, What *be* these? And he answered me, [x]These *are* the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem. 20 And the

chaps. 2. 12; 3. 2.—[x] Ezra 4. 1, 4, 7; 5. 3.

troduces a new vision (ii, 1; v, 1; vi, 1). If all the visions came in one night they must have followed one another in rapid succession. **Four horns**—It is useless to speculate as to whether these horns belonged to one, two, or four animals, for that does not affect the symbolism. *Horn* is a symbol of power (Amos vi, 13; Mic. iv, 13; Jer. xlviii, 25); *four* indicates the four points of the compass; the *four horns* represent powers approaching from the four points of the compass. This does not mean, however, that the enemies actually approached or were expected to approach from four directions; the expression is used in the more general sense of *every direction* or *all directions*. From all sides enemies crowded upon the Jews during the postexilic period; all these are to be overthrown. Some have supposed that Zechariah has in mind four definite powers, either the Babylonians, Medes and Persians, Greeks, Romans, or the Assyrians, Egyptians, Babylonians, Medes and Persians. In view of verses 19, 21, which indicate that the enemies are enemies of the past, the Greeks and Romans cannot be meant. The first interpretation, which leaves the enemies unidentified, is to be preferred. 19. The prophet turns for an explanation to the interpreting angel, who replies that the four horns represent the powers that have been hostile toward the Jews. **Judah**—The southern kingdom. **Israel**—The northern kingdom. **Jerusalem**—Mentioned on account of its special sanctity as the earthly dwelling place of Jehovah. In the corresponding passage in verse 21 only Judah is mentioned, which has led many to suppose that in this verse the other names are a later addition.

In verse 20 a new feature is intro-

LORD showed me four carpenters. 21 Then said I, What come these to do? And he spake, saying, These *are* the horns which have scattered Judah, so that no man did lift up his head: but these are come to fray them, to cast out the horns of the Gentiles, which [y]lifted up *their* horn over the land of Judah to scatter it.

[y] Psa. 75. 4, 5.

duced. **Carpenters**—R. V., "smiths"; A. V. follows LXX.; literally, *workmen, artificers.* The term is used of workers in wood as well as in iron or stone. If the horns are thought of as made of iron (Mic. iv, 13) *smith* is the more suitable translation. The smiths may have had their hammers in their hands, ready to strike. 21. **He**—The interpreting angel, whose duty it was to explain the symbolism to the prophet. According to his interpretation the four smiths represent the agents who are divinely appointed to execute judgment upon the nations. **No man did lift up his head**—The people were completely overwhelmed. **Fray**—R. V., "terrify." Throw in a state of alarm (2 Sam. xvii, 2). **Cast out** ["down"] **the horns**—A picture of utter destruction (compare Amos iii, 14). Who the powers are that Jehovah will use to execute his judgment upon the hostile nations is not stated. It is enough to assure the despondent community that the judgment will be executed.

CHAPTER II.

The third vision—the man with the measuring line, 1–13.

The overthrow of the hostile nations (i, 18–21) will prepare the way for the exaltation of the oppressed people. Jerusalem will be rebuilt, Jehovah will return to live in Zion, and many nations will join themselves to the redeemed community. To bring these truths before the prophet and the people is the purpose of the third vision, in which Zechariah sees a man with a measuring line in

CHAPTER II.

I LIFTED up mine eyes again, and looked, and behold [a]a man with a measuring line in his hand. 2 Then said I, Whither goest thou? And he said unto me, [b]To measure Jerusalem, to see what *is* the breadth thereof, and what *is* the length thereof. 3 And, behold, the angel that talked with me went

[a] Ezek. 40. 3.—[b] Rev. 11. 1; 21. 15, 16.

his hand, going forth to measure Jerusalem, for the purpose of determining the location of the new walls (ii, 1, 2). He is informed that walls are not necessary because (1) the city will be too populous to be contained within walls, (2) Jehovah himself will be a wall of fire around her (3–5). The vision proper is followed by an exhortation to the exiled Jews to get ready to flee from the land of exile (6, 7), for Jehovah is about to shake the nations (8, 9) and to return to Zion, to take his permanent abode there (10–13).

1, 2. **A man with a measuring line**—An expansion of the promise in i, 16. The man is distinct from the interpreting angel; he is left undefined, because his personality is unimportant; his act alone is of significance. Again the prophet seeks an explanation. **Whither goest thou?**—In the other visions the prophet addresses himself to the interpreting angel, here to the man with the measuring line. The interpreter appears after the man has given the desired information. **To measure Jerusalem**—To determine the extent of the city. Verses 4, 5 suggest that it was for the purpose of determining the location of the walls, which were still in ruins in the days of Zechariah.

3. Now the interpreting angel appears upon the scene. **Went forth**—The same verb is translated in the next clause "went out." This raises the question, whence did the one or the other go forth? For the first verb LXX. reads "stood"; that is, beside the prophet. If the present Hebrew text is retained we must think of the

forth, and another angel went out to meet him, 4 And said unto him, Run, speak to this young man, saying, [c]Jerusalem shall be inhabited *as* towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein:

[c] Jer. 31. 27; Ezek. 36. 10, 11.—[d] Isa. 26. 1; chap. 9. 8.—[e] Isa. 60. 19; Rev. 21. 23.

angel as stepping forward from the place where he stood beside the prophet, or from the background to which he had retired after he had interpreted the preceding vision. As he stood forth he was met by another angel who came upon the scene from the opposite direction. This thought is implied also in the reading of LXX. To express the thought more clearly verse 3 might be translated, "And, behold, the angel that talked with me stood forth, and another angel came forth to meet him." Less natural is the interpretation which makes the interpreting angel come upon the scene from the presence of Jehovah with a new message for the prophet, when he is met by the other angel.

4, 5. **And said unto him**—The interpreting angel is the speaker. The other angel becomes his servant, so that he himself may remain with the prophet, whose guide and interpreter he is to be throughout the entire series of visions. **Run, speak to this young man**—Not to the prophet, but to the man with the measuring line, who meanwhile had gone to his task. The messenger is exhorted to *run*, so that the man may be stopped quickly, for his efforts are wasted. **As towns without walls**—The new Jerusalem will not be like the capital of the preexilic kingdom; it cannot be measured, nor confined within walls; it will resemble rather a wide-open country, covered with towns and villages. This extension becomes necessary as a result of the wonderful increase in the number of inhabitants and their possessions (Isa. xlix, 19, 20; Ezek. xxxviii, 11), all of which will be an evidence of the restored favor of Jehovah.

The absence of walls might be distressing to some, for it would seem to expose them to hostile attacks, but there need be no fear, for the protection granted to the new city will be superior to anything that could be offered even by the strongest wall; Jehovah himself will be round about her (compare Psa. cxxv, 1, 2). **A wall of fire**—A defense of fire that will consume everyone who dares to come near it (Isa. xxvi, 1; xxxiii, 20). **The glory in the midst of her**—Jehovah will manifest himself in all his glory, so that the whole city will be filled with it.

5 For I, saith the LORD, will be unto her [d]a wall of fire round about, [e]and will be the glory in the midst of her.

6 Ho, ho, *come forth*, and flee [f]from the land of the north, saith the

[f] Isa. 48. 20; 52. 11; Jer. 1. 14; 50. 8; 51. 6, 45.

The vision is followed by an exhortation addressed to the Jews who are still in exile, to prepare for a return, for Jehovah is about to manifest himself in mercy and power. Some consider the verses a part of the account of the vision. The interpreting angel is thought to have uttered the words in the hearing of the prophet, so that the latter might pass them on. It seems more natural, however, to suppose that the vision closes with verse 5, and that verses 6–13 are an expansion of the vision by the prophet (compare Amos viii, 4ff.; ix, 2ff.). He has seen the glories of the future; now he thinks of the exiles still far from home, and to them he addresses this message of hope; they too will share, and that speedily, in the promised glory.

6. **Ho, ho**—The Hebrew word is translated also "woe" or "alas"; it is more than a call to attention; it always expresses a feeling of pain on the part of the speaker, arising from compassion with those who are addressed. **Flee**—The time of restoration has come, when Jehovah will send judgment upon their present abode. **The land of the north**—Babylonia, the land of exile (verse 7; compare

LORD: for I have [g]spread you abroad as the four winds of the heaven, saith the LORD. 7 [h]Deliver thyself, O Zion, that dwellest *with* the daughter of Babylon. 8 For thus saith the LORD of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that [i]toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye. 9 For, behold, I

[g] Deut. 28. 64; Ezek. 17. 21.—[h] Rev. 18. 4.

[i] Deut. 32. 10; Psa. 17. 8; 2 Thess. 1. 6.

Jer. iii, 12, 18; xxiii, 8; see on Joel ii, 20). **I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heaven**—The more important of the numerous interpretations suggested for these words are: (1) *Spread out*=scatter (in exile), *as the four winds*=to the four winds, that is, in every direction; the whole clause referring to the past judgment upon the Jews, by which they were scattered in every direction; now the prophet urges them to return from these places. This interpretation would make *the land of the north,* as the land of exile, practically equivalent to *the four winds of heaven,* an identification which may not be altogether impossible, but which is highly improbable. Another objection is the presence of the preposition *as,* which cannot be used in the sense of *to* (compare Ezek. xvii, 21; LXX. reads "from"; see below). (2) On the assumption that the present text is correct, a more satisfactory interpretation, which retains the natural meaning of the words, regards the tense as the so-called *prophetic perfect,* used by the prophet because he "so transposes himself in imagination into the future that he describes the future event as if it had been already seen or heard by him" (G.-K., 106n). With this interpretation the clause supplies the reason for the appeal. The people are to flee because Jehovah does not want them to perish with their captors; he has decreed to make of them a great nation, whose influence will be felt everywhere, just as the winds of heaven blow in every direction. LXX. offers a slightly different reading, which suits the context very well, "for I will gather you *from* the four winds of heaven," that is, from every direction; a promise found frequently in the Old Testament. The beginning is to be made in Babylon.

The appeal is repeated in verse 7 in a slightly different form. **Zion**—Understood ordinarily as a vocative, equivalent to *inhabitant of Zion;* applied here to those who still dwell in the land of exile, called in verse 10 "daughter of Zion." LXX. takes "Zion" as an accusative of direction—to Zion; the whole clause, "escape to Zion." If "to Zion" is read with LXX., verse 7 carries further the thought of verse 6. The exiles are to escape from Babylon to Zion. This translation necessitates a change in the verb forms of verse 7, which are in the *feminine singular;* if they are coördinated with "flee" in verse 6 the *masculine plural* must be read. Since the common translation does not require any change, it should probably be retained. **With the daughter of Babylon**—Among the inhabitants of Babylon. If interpreted like the common phrase *daughter of Zion,* the phrase used here might mean either the city of Babylon without its inhabitants (compare Lam. ii, 8), or the inhabitants without the city (compare Mic. iv, 10), or the city including its inhabitants (so most frequently); here the emphasis seems to be on dwelling among the inhabitants.

Verses 8, 9 give one reason why they are to flee: Jehovah is about to execute judgment upon the oppressors. Verse 8 is one of the verses that try the patience and skill of commentators, more especially the clause, "after the glory hath he sent me." With these words omitted the meaning becomes clear. Jehovah is sending a message of judgment to the nations, because they have "touched" his dearest possession. **Toucheth**—Roughly, for the purpose of inflicting pain and suffering. **The apple of his eye**—Literally, *door of his eye;* a different word is used in Deut. xxxii, 10,

will [k]shake mine hand upon them, and they shall be a spoil to their servants: and [l]ye shall know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me.

10 [m]Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I [n]will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD. **11** [o]And many nations shall be joined to the LORD [p]in that day, and shall be [q]my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and [r]thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts

[k] Isa. 11. 15; 19. 16.——[l] Chap. 4. 9.——[m] Isa. 12. 6; 54. 1; Zeph. 3. 14.——[n] Lev. 26. 12; Ezek. 37 27; chap. 8. 3; John 1. 14; 2 Cor. 6. 16.——[o] Isa. 2. 2, 3; 49. 22; 60. 3, etc.; chap. 8. 22, 23.——[p] Chap. 3. 10.——[q] Exod. 12. 49.——[r] Verse 9; Ezek. 33. 33.

where the same idea is expressed. The reference is to the pupil of the eye, which is peculiarly sensitive to the slightest touch; so Jehovah is very sensitive to any wrong inflicted upon his people. **After the glory hath he sent me**—These words have proved a puzzle to all commentators. To enumerate the various interpretations suggested would take up considerable space, while nothing would be gained by it. If the words are original it seems best to regard not only the words quoted but the entire sentence, "After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you," as a parenthetical clause, spoken by the prophet. In verses 6, 7 he has addressed the exiles, in verses 8, 9 he announces judgment upon the nations; parenthetically he exclaims, I have a message not only to you exiles, but also to the nations who are oppressing you. The glory after which the speaker is sent must be understood as the fame or honor which comes to a messenger when his words are fulfilled; by the fulfillment the prophet will be attested as a true and reliable messenger of Jehovah. In the *Messages of the Prophets* the first part is paraphrased "the fulfillment of the prediction will bring honor to me" (compare Isa. viii, 18). The meaning remains practically the same if the words are interpreted as a relative clause, "who sent me after glory. . . ." The expression *to send after glory* is peculiar in this connection; the words may be out of place, or the text may have suffered corruption.

The message of judgment is contained in verse 9. **For**—Heb. *kî*; should be left untranslated; it simply introduces the direct address, like the Greek ὅτι (G.-K., 157b). **I will shake**—Better, *I am about to shake.* The Hebrew construction calls attention to the imminence of the event (G.-K., 116p.). *Shake the hand* is equivalent to *strike* (Isa. xi, 15; xix, 16). **A spoil to their servants**—R. V., "to those that served them." The judgment will be according to the *lex talionis.* The nations have enslaved the Jews; when Jehovah interferes the Jews will enslave the nations. **Ye shall know**—The exiles, for whose encouragement even the words of judgment against the nations are uttered. When the nations are overthrown these exiles will be convinced that the prophet is a messenger of Jehovah, and they will be ready to place confidence in his other utterances.

In verses 10–13 Jehovah urges the "daughter of Zion" to rejoice. **Daughter of Zion**—Identical with "Zion" in verse 7, the exiles to be delivered from Babylon; they are to rejoice greatly in anticipation of the glorious redemption. **Come, . . . dwell**—The construction is the same as in verse 9, "I am about to come." The coming is imminent, but the divine purpose can be carried out only if the temple is completed (i, 16). **In the midst of thee**—In the midst of the exiles to help and comfort them (see on Joel ii, 27). The sway of Jehovah will extend also over other nations. **Many nations shall be joined to Jehovah**—They will recognize him as the true God and render homage to him (see on Hag. ii, 7; Mic. iv, 1–5; compare Isa. ii, 2–4). **In that day**—When the promises made to the exiles receive their fulfillment. These "converted" nations will become the peo-

hath sent me unto thee. **12** And the LORD shall [s]inherit Judah his portion in the holy land, and [t]shall choose Jerusalem again. **13** [u]Be silent, O all flesh, before the LORD: for he is raised [x]up out of [1]his holy habitation.

[s] Deut. 32. 9.—[t] Chap. 1. 17.—[u] Hab. 2. 20; Zeph. 1. 7.—[x] Psa. 68. 5; Isa. 57. 15.

—[1] Heb. *the habitation of his holiness*, Deut. 26. 15; Isa. 63. 15.

ple of Jehovah, and with the Jews they will form one people, in whose midst Jehovah will dwell as helper and protector (see on Joel ii, 27). 11b is a repetition of 9b and has the same significance (see on verse 9).

Verse 12 repeats the thought of i, 17, that Jehovah will select Jerusalem to be his royal dwelling place. **Inherit**—Equivalent to *take possession*. There may be a reference to Deut. xxxii, 9, where Israel is called the "portion" of Jehovah and the "lot of his inheritance." **Judah**—The remnant escaped from Babylon. **Holy land**—So called because Jehovah will dwell there (see on Joel ii, 1; compare Exod. iii, 5). **Choose Jerusalem**—See on i, 17.

13. The crisis is at hand, the judgment is about to break forth; it behooves all to await in awe the terrible manifestation of Jehovah. **Be silent**—Wait in reverential silence (Hab. ii, 20; Zeph. i, 7). **All flesh**—Not only the Jews, but all the nations of the earth, for all will be affected by the coming of Jehovah. **He is raised up**—R. V., "waked up"; from his inactivity. He has already started to carry out his redemptive purpose, as indicated in the preceding verses (compare Hag. ii, 6). **His holy habitation**—In the heavens (compare Amos ix, 6). While his people suffered he seemed to take no interest in the affairs of the world; now all is changed; he is about to execute judgment, and to establish a new and more glorious kingdom of God upon the earth.

CHAPTER III.

The fourth vision—the trial and acquittal of the high priest Joshua, 1–10.

In the fourth vision Zechariah sees the high priest Joshua standing before the angel of Jehovah; at his right hand is the adversary, ready to bring accusations against him; but before he can open his mouth he is severely rebuked (1, 2). At the command of the angel the servants take from Joshua his filthy garments and clothe him in the rich garments of the high-priestly office, including the miter (3–5). Whereupon the angel instructs Joshua in the duties and responsibilities of the office to which he is restored; Joshua is promised access to the Most High if he will properly discharge his duties (6, 7); he and his fellows are proclaimed a *sign* of the coming of "Branch," who will remove iniquity from the land in one day, and restore peace and prosperity forever (8–10).

The first, second, and third visions deal with the judgment upon the nations, the restoration from exile, the rebuilding of the city and temple, and the expansion of the new community to the four corners of the earth. To make possible permanent peace and harmony between the people and their God there is needed, in addition to all these things, a moral and spiritual regeneration. This regeneration is symbolized by the fourth vision. Primarily the vision concerns the religious leader, the high priest; his sin is washed away (4), and he is restored to intimate fellowship with Jehovah. But these experiences come to him, in the vision, not as an individual, but as the representative of the people. Whatever befalls him affects the whole people. His cleansing symbolizes the cleansing of the people; his restoration to fellowship with Jehovah symbolizes the restoration of the people to fellowship with their God, which needed to be accomplished if the new community was to become in truth the people of Jehovah. Because the cleansing of

CHAPTER III.

AND he showed me [a]Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and [b] [1]Satan standing at his right hand [2]to resist him. 2 And the LORD said unto Satan, [c]The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that [d]hath

[a] Hag. 1. 1.—[b] Psa. 109. 6; Rev. 12. 10. —[1] That is, *an adversary.*—[2] Heb. *to be his adversary.*—[c] Jude 9.—[d] Chap. 1. 17; Rom. 8. 33.

the high priest symbolizes this regeneration, he can become a *sign* of the coming of "Branch," who will complete the task and become the ruler of the regenerated community.

1. **He showed me**—Either Jehovah, who is the author of all prophetic revelation (i, 20; Amos vii, 1), or the interpreting angel, who acts as the divine agent both in presenting and in interpreting the visions; probably the latter. **Joshua**—Called also Jeshua (Ezra ii, 2; iii, 2), the son of Jehozadak (Hag. i, 1; 1 Chron. vi, 15), the grandson of Seraiah (2 Kings xxv, 18). He was the ecclesiastical head, while Zerubbabel was the civil ruler (Hag. i, 1). **The high priest**—Joshua appears throughout the entire vision in his official capacity, not as a private individual (see introductory remarks to the vision). **Angel of Jehovah**—See on i, 11. **Standing before**—For what purpose is not stated. The phrase is used in a judicial sense of a person standing before a judge, either as plaintiff or as defendant (Num. xxvii, 2; 1 Kings iii, 16; Deut. xix, 17); more frequently of a servant standing before his master, to minister to his wants (Gen. xli, 46; Deut. i, 38); here in the judicial sense. The angel of Jehovah sits upon the judgment seat, Joshua stands before him as the accused, the adversary appears as the accuser. **Satan**—Better, with margin R. V., "*the* Adversary"; the presence of the article indicates that the noun is not to be understood as a proper name; otherwise in 1 Chron. xxi, 1 (see Introduction, p. 599; compare Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible*, article "Satan"). **At his right hand**—Equivalent to *by his side* (compare Psa. cix, 6). **To resist him**—Better, R. V., "to be his adversary," that is, to present the accusation. The verb is derived from the same root as the noun *adversary*.

Since no opportunity was given to present the charges, it remains a matter of conjecture what were the indictments the adversary desired to present; and it is not strange that from the earliest rabbinical period to the present much speculation concerning this point has been indulged in. The place of Joshua in the vision as the representative of the people precludes the idea that the reference is to the removal of personal sins of the high priest, whether moral or ceremonial. The question, "Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" also would seem to indicate that it is the people against which the adversary appears. It seems more satisfactory, therefore, to think that the sins against which complaint is made are the sins of the people, which the high priest bears as the representative and mediator of the people. That corruption was not entirely wiped out by the exile is made clear in the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah. The adversary was anxious to make prominent the shortcomings which remained, in order to bring about the destruction of the people; but the gracious purpose of Jehovah provided a way of escape. Nowack's contention, that there was no ground for the accusation, is contrary to the facts, as stated by the postexilic prophets.

2. Permission is denied to the adversary to present his charges. **Jehovah**—Identical with "angel of Jehovah" in verse 1 (see on i, 11). **Satan**—As in verse 1. **Rebuke thee**—Reprove, put to silence (Jer. xxix, 27). The sentence is repeated for the sake of emphasis, and to permit the addition of a clause explaining why Jehovah must rebuke the adversary.

chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: [e]*is* not this a brand plucked out of the fire? 3 Now Joshua was clothed with [f]filthy garments, and stood before the angel. 4 And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, [g]and I will clothe thee with change of raiment. 5 And I said, Let them set a fair [h]mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon

[e] Amos 4. 11; Rom. 11. 5; Jude 23.—[f] Isa 64. 6.

[g] Isa. 61. 10; Luke 15. 22; Rev. 19. 8.—[h] Exod. 29. 6; chap. 6. 11.

Jehovah that hath chosen Jerusalem—The adversary was seeking to persuade Jehovah to cast off Judah and Jerusalem; it cannot be done, for Jehovah has made his choice (compare i, 17; ii, 12), which must stand. True, the sins of the people prevent a close union between them and Jehovah, but these sins he can remove. **Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?**—Not Joshua, but the people represented by Joshua, their high priest. The *fire* is the exile (compare Amos iv, 11); from it Jehovah has restored his people; surely he will not leave his work incomplete; he cannot permit the adversary to bring to naught his own gracious purpose.

Verses 3ff. show what Jehovah is determined to do with the sins that form the basis of the adversary's accusation. **Filthy garments**—There is no allusion here to the custom, described by Livy, of accused persons wearing sordid garments during their trial. The *filthy garments* are a symbol of sin, of moral uncleanness (Isa. iv, 4; lxiv, 6); as already said, not of the personal sins of the high priest but of the sins of the people. "A nation so guilty . . . could no longer be the holy and priestly nation; its priests could no longer be priests; nor its high priest be high priest any more." If the sin could be removed the community need not be cast off; once more it might be called "an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession." This Jehovah proceeds to do. **He answered**—The angel. For *answer* see on i, 10. **Those that stood before him**—The servants; they are ordered to remove the filthy garments. Then the angel turns to Joshua and explains to him the significance of the proceeding; it symbolizes the removal of his sin, or, better, the people's sin. At the same time he issues orders to substitute clean garments for those that have been discarded. **I will clothe**—Should be translated as an *imperative* (G.-K., 113z; so LXX.), "clothe," which is coördinate with "take away." The carrying out of the command is recorded in verse 5, "they clothed him." **Change of raiment**—R. V., "rich apparel." A word found again only in Isa. iii, 22, where R. V. translates "festival robes"; not necessarily costly and magnificent, but fresh and clean garments; the putting on of these completes the process of purification.

5. **And I said**—If the present Hebrew text is original, the prophet must be the speaker. He has been an interested bystander; now he can contain himself no longer, and he prays that the diadem be restored to the high priest. LXX. omits these words and continues with the *imperative*, "set," which is coördinated to "take away" and "clothe" in verse 4. LXX. presents the smoother reading and may be original. **Set a fair** ["clean"] **miter upon his head**—The miter completes the high-priestly dress; its restoration will prepare Joshua to act again as the mediator between God and the people; therefore the placing of the miter upon the head completes the transaction begun by the removing of the filthy garments. The people are not only cleansed, but fellowship and communion with Jehovah is reëstablished. The word translated "miter" is not identical with the one used in Exod. xxviii, 4, 36–38, but it undoubtedly refers to the same thing.

his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD stood by. 6 And the angel of the LORD protested unto Joshua, saying, 7 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt [i]keep my [3]charge, then thou shalt also [k]judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts, and I will give thee [4]places to walk among these that [l]stand by. 8 Hear now, O Joshua the high priest,

[i] Lev. 8. 35; 1 Kings 2. 3; Ezek. 44. 16. —[3] Or, *ordinance.*

[k] Deut. 17. 9; Mal. 2. 7.—[4] Heb. *walks.* —[l] Chap. 4. 14; 6. 5.

The command of the angel was executed, Joshua was clothed with clean garments, and the miter was placed upon his head. **The angel of Jehovah stood by**—Superintending the proceedings and by his presence giving to them his approval. Some commentators combine the last clause of verse 5 with verse 6 and read the two, "And the angel of Jehovah rose and protested unto Joshua," which is smoother; but is there sufficient justification for the change?

In verses 6–10 is contained the address which the angel of Jehovah makes to Joshua—again not as a private individual but as the representative of the people—concerning his duties and privileges; at the same time he points to the coming of one who will completely remove sin from the land, and restore permanent peace and prosperity. **Protested**—Affirmed solemnly and earnestly (Gen. xliii, 3; Jer. xi, 7, where the same word is used). **Walk in my ways**—The ways pointed out by Jehovah; in other words, if the conduct is in accord with the principles of Jehovah's righteousness. **Keep my charge**—The high-priestly office. The first refers primarily to uprightness in the private life, the second to the faithful performance of official duties. **Thou shalt also judge my house**—With these words begins the apodosis. Commentators are not agreed on the interpretation of this clause. Some hold that *house* is used metaphorically for *people* (compare Hos. viii, 1; ix, 15), and that the promise means that the high priest will be the *sole* head of the community; he will take upon himself even those duties which in preëxilic times were discharged by the king, and at present by Zerubbabel. A modified form of this interpretation understands the promise to imply only that the high priest is to "direct the people in all things respecting the law of God, and especially to judge those who ministered in the sanctuary." If *house* is taken to mean *people* there is no justification for limiting the high priest's authority to things religious. Others understand **my house** to refer to the temple, soon to be completed; in it the high priest will be supreme. In view of the fact that Zechariah gives such prominent place to Zerubbabel, and so to the family of David, it is not likely that he expected the supreme authority in secular affairs to pass entirely into the hands of Joshua or his descendants; therefore the second interpretation is to be preferred (see closing remarks on verse 7). The next clause speaks of the performance of the common priestly duties. **Keep my courts**—Perform properly the priestly duties, and keep out of the temple everything that is idolatrous and unclean. **I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by**—R. V., "a place of access." Another difficult clause. The meaning of the expression translated "place of access" or "places to walk" is uncertain. Some consider the Hebrew word an Aramaic form of the Hiphil participle of the verb *to walk*, with the transitive meaning *leaders* or the intransitive meaning *walkers*. This formation of the verb is found only in the Aramaic portions of Daniel (iii, 25; iv, 34), never in Hebrew; but if it is assumed here the transitive meaning is to be preferred. With this translation the promise means that Jehovah will provide for Joshua leaders or guards, who will protect and defend him from all dangers. These

thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they *are* [m] [5]men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth [n]my servant the [o]BRANCH. 9 For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua; [p]upon one stone *shall*

[m] Psa. 71. 7; Isa. 8. 18; 20. 3.——[5] Heb. *men of wonder*, or, *sign*, as Ezek. 12. 11; 24. 24.——[n] Isa. 42. 1; 49. 3, 5; 52. 13; 53. 11; Ezek. 34. 23, 24.——[o] Isa. 4. 2; 11. 1; Jer. 23. 5; 33. 15; chap. 6. 12; Luke 1. 78.——[p] Psa. 118. 22; Isa. 28. 16.

leaders are to be *among these that stand by*, that is, the angels. In this case *out of* or *from among* instead of *among* would be more suitable. This peculiarity creates a suspicion concerning the correctness of the translation and interpretation; besides, the promise seems to be vague and indefinite. It is preferable, therefore, to take the word as the plural of a noun meaning *walk* or *place of access*, the plural being used to express the thought that the high priest may come again and again. Joshua is to be permitted to walk among the heavenly host and thus to have free access to the throne of God, and this privilege is to be enjoyed not only after the resurrection (Targum), but in this life, whenever the high priest desires to bring his petitions and requests for the community to the throne of God.

In connection with these promises it should never be overlooked that they are made to the high priest as the representative of the people. Whatever is promised to him symbolizes a similar promise to the whole people, though it is also true that when the people are restored to fellowship with Jehovah the office of the high priest will be clothed with new splendor.

Verses 8, 9 contain a more remarkable promise. **Hear**—Addressed to the high priest alone. The address itself begins with "thou and thy fellows." **Thy fellows that sit before thee**—Not now, while Joshua is in the presence of the angel, but in the gatherings of the priests (compare 2 Kings iv, 38; vi, 1). These words form the subject, what follows is the predicate, a fact which is obscured in the English translation. **For**—Heb. *kî* does not introduce a causal clause, but should be rendered "indeed," "truly" (G.-K., 148d). **They are men wondered at**—R. V., "they are men that are a sign"; literally *men of sign are they*. A better rendering of the whole sentence would be, "thou and thy fellows that sit before thee are truly men of sign," that is, men who in their persons and office foreshadow some future event. The event foreshadowed in this case is immediately stated. **I will bring forth**—Better, *I am about to bring forth;* in the near future. **My servant**—Any individual or group of individuals commissioned to carry out the divine purpose may be called Jehovah's servant. In this sense the title is applied to the prophets (2 Kings ix, 7; Isa. xx, 3), to the Messianic king (Hag. ii, 23), to Israel as the Messianic nation (Isa. xl-liii), etc. **The Branch**—In Hebrew without the article, "Branch"; margin, "Shoot," or "Sprout," which shows that the word is to be understood as a proper name (compare vi, 12). The title is derived from such passages as Jer. xxiii, 5; xxxiii, 15. In Isa. xi, 1, a different word is used; compare also Ezek. xxxiv, 23, 24; xxxvii, 24. It is a shoot that will sprout from the ruined dynasty of David; and vi, 12, 13 (compare iv, 9), shows that the prophet has in mind Zerubbabel.

Verse 9 makes it clear that Zechariah expected the kingdom of God to be established and the Messianic king to appear in the near future, but in details the verse is exceedingly obscure. **For**—Connects verse 9 with verse 8, especially with the verb "I am about to bring forth"; it introduces a statement which indicates that the fullness of time is at hand. **The stone that I have laid before Joshua**—The words appear to be addressed to the high priest; therefore *before Joshua* is equivalent to *before thee*. Joshua is urged to look upon the stone that is

be [q]seven eyes: behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the LORD of hosts, and [r]I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.

[q] Chap. 4. 10; Rev. 5. 6.—[r] Jer. 31. 34; 50. 20; Mic. 7. 18, 19; chap. 13. 1.

already prepared. What is the *stone?* Many answers have been given to this question. Some say the foundation stone of the temple; some, the top stone (iv, 7); some, the precious stone adorning the high priest's breastplate; some, the Messiah; some, an altar or a substitute for the ark as an instrument of propitiation; some, the temple itself; some, the people of Israel as the foundation of the new order of things; some, "the kingdom or people of God, outwardly insignificant when compared with the great mountain (iv, 7), which symbolizes the power of the world." These are the most important interpretations suggested; all are more or less doubtful, probably not one offers the right interpretation. Standing by itself or in some other connection the word might, perhaps, mean any one of these, but in the present connection they are not suitable. The interpretation that fits most perfectly in the context is one first suggested by Wellhausen, who sees in the stone *the precious stone* for the diadem of "Branch," who is the Messianic king (compare vi, 9ff.). It is already placed before the high priest, ready for use when "Branch" appears, which may be at any time. **Upon one stone shall be seven eyes**—A kind of parenthetical clause, describing the stone more fully. The numeral *one* is used to emphasize the peculiarity, equivalent to *upon this single stone.* If the above interpretation is correct, the *eyes* are the *facets* of the precious stone, which sparkle like eyes; *seven* might be understood literally, or, as in other passages, to indicate a "moderately large number" (Isa. iv, 1), so that the thought would be simply that it was completely covered with eyes. **I will**—Or, *I am about to.* **Engrave the graving thereof**—What the inscription will be is not stated, probably the name of "Branch," that is, Zerubbabel (vi, 9ff.; Hag. ii, 23). With this interpretation the connection between verse 8 and verse 9 becomes natural and complete.

10 [s]In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbor [t]under the vine and under the fig tree.

[s] Chap. 2. 11.—[t] 1 Kings 4. 25; Isa. 36. 16; Mic. 4. 4.

The first result of the dawn of the Messianic age will be the complete removal of iniquity, the beginning of which is symbolized by the cleansing of the high priest (see on verse 1). **That land**—Better, *this land,* that is, Judah, now not limited to the old territory, but extending in all directions (ii, 11). **In one day**—That is, speedily. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews identifies this *one* day with the day on which Jesus was crucified (Heb. vii, 27; ix, 12; x, 10). 10. With the Messianic king on the throne and all iniquity removed, an era of peace and prosperity will commence. For the picture see on Joel i, 12; compare Mic. iv, 4. **Call**—R. V., "invite"; to share the comforts.

CHAPTER IV.

The fifth vision—the golden candlestick and the two olive trees, 1–14.

The fourth and fifth visions are closely connected; the former centers around the person of the ecclesiastical head, Joshua, the high priest, the latter around that of the civil head, Zerubbabel, the governor. In the vision Zechariah beholds a golden candlestick with seven lamps; on top was a reservoir of oil connected with the lamps by pipes. Beside it stood two olive trees; from the overhanging branches of these oil flowed continually into the reservoir and from it into the lamps.

It may not be possible to determine the meaning of every feature of the vision, but its general purpose is clear. (See p. 592.)

1. In this vision the interpreting

CHAPTER IV.

AND [a]the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, [b]as a man that is wakened out of his sleep, 2 And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold [c]a candlestick all *of* gold, [1]with a bowl upon the top of it, [d]and his seven lamps thereon, and [2]seven pipes to the seven lamps, which *are* upon the top thereof: 3 [e]And two olive trees by it, one upon the right *side* of the bowl, and the other upon the left *side* thereof. 4 So I answered and spake to the angel that talked with

[a] Chap. 2. 3.—[b] Dan. 8. 18.—[c] Exod. 25. 31; Rev. 1. 12.—[1] Heb. *with her bowl.*

[d] Exod. 25. 37; Rev. 4. 5.—[2] Or, *seven several pipes to the lamps*, etc.—[e] Verses 11, 12; Rev. 11. 4.

angel appears first. **Came again**—The angel seems to have withdrawn temporarily; in the fourth vision he appears—if at all—only in iii, 1. Perhaps "he came again and waked me" is equivalent to "he waked me again," to see a new vision. Evidently Zechariah recognizes that his condition during the visions is not the same as during the intervals that elapse between the separate visions. **Waked me**—What the prophet has seen and heard has overpowered him; he has become spiritually exhausted, and has fallen into a state resembling sleep (Luke ix, 32); out of this condition the angel rouses him to show him the new vision. **What seest thou?**—The angel addresses this question to the prophet as soon as he opens his eyes (see on Amos vii, 8; viii, 2; compare Jer. i, 11, 13).

The principal features of the new vision are described in verses 2, 3. **I have looked**—R. V., "seen"; perhaps better, *I see.* **A candlestick all of gold**—This candlestick may have been suggested by the candlestick in the tabernacle (Exod. xxv, 31; 1 Chron. iv, 20), which was of gold, but in some respects the candlestick in the vision differs from its prototype. **With a bowl upon the top of it**—This means a reservoir for the oil used in the lamps. The oil holder was absent from the candlestick in the tabernacle; there the oil was supplied daily by the priests. However, the bowl may have been suggested by the *cups* (Exod. xxv, 31, 33, 34), though the Hebrew word used here is entirely different, and the cups served only as ornaments. **Seven lamps**—How they were attached is not stated. **Seven pipes**—To supply oil from the reservoir. This is another feature absent from the candlestick in the tabernacle. The Hebrew is literally "seven and seven pipes to the lamps," which admits of a twofold interpretation; either, fourteen pipes to the seven lamps, that is, two to each, or, in a distributive sense, seven pipes to each one of the seven lamps (so R. V.), a total of forty-nine. The Hebrew permits either interpretation, and either is thinkable; the latter is more in accord with Hebrew usage. No indication is given how or where the pipes were connected with the lamps. LXX. and Vulgate omit one "seven" and read "seven pipes to the lamps," that is, one to each, which simplifies the picture and may be original. **Which are upon the top thereof**—The meaning seems to be that the lamps are on the top of the candlestick; the same statement is made concerning the oil holder, which makes it very difficult to determine the exact relative position of the different parts of the candlestick. Some commentators favor the omission of the words as an erroneous repetition from the first part of the verse. **Two olive trees**—Another feature absent from the tabernacle (compare Rev. xi, 4). One was upon the left, the other upon the right side of the oil holder; in verse 11 it is said that they were beside the candlestick, which is equally true. Two branches from these trees, one from each, supplied the oil for the lamps.

4, 5. The prophet fails to understand the vision, and he turns to his companion for an explanation. **Answered**—See on i, 10. **These**—The contents of the entire vision, not only the trees. The interpreting angel expresses sur-

me, saying, What *are* these, my lord? 5 Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord. 6 Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This *is* the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, [f]Not by [3]might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts. 7 Who *art* thou, [g]O great mountain? before Zerubbabel *thou shalt become* a plain: and he shall bring forth [h]the headstone *thereof* [i]*with* shoutings, *crying*, Grace, grace unto it. 8 Moreover the word of the LORD

[f] Hos. 1., 7.—[3] Or, *army*.—[g] Jer. 51. 25; Matt. 21. 21.

[h] Psa. 118. 22.—[i] Ezra 3. 11, 13.

prise that the prophet, who should be familiar with the symbolism of the temple, does not understand the vision, "Knowest thou not what these are?"

6. When the prophet confesses ignorance the angel proceeds to explain. **This**—The entire vision. All the features were needed to complete the picture which was to serve as the means of instruction; but the angel attaches here a symbolic meaning only to one feature, the mysterious oil supply; the other features are of secondary importance, though a symbolical meaning is attached also to the two branches (verse 12), and perhaps to the lamps (verse 10). The message was intended primarily for Zerubbabel, the civil governor. The interpretation is given in a single sentence. **Not by might, nor by power**—By human strength or military power. **By my spirit**—As the oil is supplied to the lamps without human efforts, so Zerubbabel will be able, without the ordinary human resources (compare Neh. iv, 2), but assisted by the divine Spirit, to carry to completion the task which he has undertaken. This is not to be understood as a commendation of inactivity, but as a promise to one whose resources are exhausted, that Jehovah will not permit him to fail in his noble endeavor. For *spirit* see on Joel ii, 28. What was the enterprise that baffled Zerubbabel is not stated, but verse 7 shows that the prophet is thinking of the rebuilding of the temple, for which both Haggai and Zechariah pleaded, and to the completion of which the two are said to have contributed much (Ezra v, 2).

Verses 7–10 contain a message of encouragement addressed, on the basis of the vision, by the prophet to Zerubbabel (see on ii, 6). Most commentators regard the verses out of place, since verse 11 forms the natural continuation of verse 6. They are suitable in the mouth of Zechariah and they embody some ideas suggested by the vision (verse 10), so that they cannot be removed entirely from the latter, but the connection would become smoother if verses 7–10 were placed after verse 14. Marti thinks that the account of the vision is contained in 1–6a, 10b–14, while the rest, 6b–10a, contains the message.

Verse 7 is in the form of an apostrophe to the obstacle which threatens to thwart the purpose of Zerubbabel. **O great mountain**—Since the prophet is thinking of the rebuilding of the temple, the mountain cannot be a figure of the hostile Persian power, or of the power of the world as opposed to the kingdom of God; it is rather a "figure denoting the colossal difficulties which rose up mountain-high at the continuation and completion of the building of the temple." These difficulties will be completely removed before Zerubbabel. **The headstone** ["topstone"]—The topmost stone completing and crowning the building. The anointed of Jehovah will put the final touch on the building while the watching multitude will break forth in songs and cries of rejoicing and benediction. **Grace, grace unto it**—Not only to the stone, but to the completed temple. These are the words of the cry, a petition that Jehovah may bestow his grace and favor upon his newly completed dwelling place.

came unto me, saying, 9 The hands of Zerubbabel [k]have laid the foundation of this house; his hands [l]shall also finish it; and [m]thou shalt know that the [n]LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you. 10 For who hath despised the day of [o]small things? [4]for they shall rejoice, and shall see the [5]plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel *with* those seven; [p]they *are* the eyes of the LORD, which run to and fro through the whole earth.

11 Then answered I, and said unto him, What *are* these [q]two olive trees upon the right *side* of the candlestick and upon the left *side* thereof? 12 And I answered again, and said unto him, What *be these* two

[k] Ezra 3. 10.—[l] Ezra 6. 15.—[m] Chaps. 2. 9, 11; 6. 15.—[n] Isa. 48. 16; chap. 2. 8.—[o] Hag. 2. 3.

[4] Or, *since the seven eyes of the LORD shall rejoice.*—[5] Heb. *stone of tin.*—[p] 2 Chron. 16. 9; Prov. 15. 3; chap. 3. 9.

Verses 9, 10 contain a new message of encouragement and promise to the prince, introduced by verse 8. **Moreover**—In addition to the message contained in verse 7. **Shall also finish it**—He will surely carry to completion the building enterprise (compare Ezra vi, 15). **Thou shalt know**—The completion of the temple will be an external attestation of the prophet as a divinely sent messenger (ii, 9, 11). **Who hath despised the day of small things?**—Or, *who despises* (G.-K., 106g). The question implies disapproval of the people's apathy toward the temple, and of their excuses that their resources are insufficient to build a temple worthy of Jehovah (Hag. ii, 3). If Jehovah is satisfied, who has a right to think lightly of the present house, though it be small? 10b states why there is no ground for despair. R. V. is preferable to A. V.: "For these seven shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel; these are the eyes of Jehovah, which run to and fro through the whole earth." The thought may be brought out even more clearly by a free rendering: "For these seven eyes of Jehovah, which run to and fro through the whole earth, shall rejoice when they see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel." **Those seven**—Not the seven eyes of iii, 9 (see there). The use of the demonstrative would seem to indicate that the eyes are referred to in the immediate context; if so, the seven lamps (verse 2) must symbolize the seven eyes. *Seven* is used as a sacred number expressing the idea of completeness or perfection (see Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible*, article "Numbers"). The eyes of Jehovah sweep over the whole earth; nothing can escape them. **Shall rejoice, and shall see**—Better, *shall rejoice when they shall see* (G.-K., 164a). The eyes are a symbol of the divine care and providence, which is world-wide. **The plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel**—A sign that he is engaged in building, or at least that he is superintending the work. If Jehovah takes such delight in the restoration of the temple, what folly for men to despise the enterprise! The text of verse 10 may be in some disorder, but the general sense is clear.

11–14. The two olive trees are still a mystery to the prophet; he therefore asks his companion to explain their significance. **Answered**—See on i, 10. **What are these two olive trees**—Said to be standing upon the right and upon the left of the candlestick; in verse 3 they are located more precisely beside the oil holder, because their connection is primarily with it. On the trees the prophet sees two branches different from the rest, whose significance he does not grasp, so without waiting for a reply to his first question he addresses a second one to his companion. R. V. gives a more accurate translation of 12b: "What are these two olive branches, which are beside the two golden spouts, that empty the golden oil out of themselves?" **What be these two olive branches**—Perhaps they were the only branches bearing fruit; at any rate, they must have been different from the rest, so that they attracted the prophet's special attention. The word here translated

olive branches which [6]through the two golden pipes [7]empty [8]the golden *oil* out of themselves? **13** And he answered me and said, Knowest thou not what these *be?* And I said, No, my lord. **14** Then said he, [r]These *are* the two [9]anointed ones, [s]that stand by [t]the Lord of the whole earth.

[q] Verse 3.——[6] Heb. *by the hand.*——[7] Or, *empty out of themselves* oil into *the gold.*——[8] Heb. *the gold.*

[r] Rev. 11. 4.——[9] Heb. *sons of oil.*——[s] Chap. 3. 7; Luke 1. 19.——[t] See Josh. 3. 11, 13; chap. 6. 5.

"branches" is used elsewhere of *ears of corn;* it is probably selected on account of the shape of the branches. **Which are beside the two golden spouts** (R. V.)—The last word occurs only here in the Old Testament, and its meaning is uncertain; *pipes* (A. V.) is probably incorrect, a different word being used in verse 2. It seems to denote the receptacle and channel which received the oil from the branches and transmitted it to the reservoir; perhaps funnel-like cups, one connected with each branch. Margin R. V. suggests a different translation, "which by means of the two golden spouts empty"; but the sense remains the same. **That empty the golden oil out of themselves**—If the marginal translation is correct the subject of the relative clause refers back to *branches*; if the reading embodied in the text is accepted it becomes uncertain whether the reference is to *branches* or to *spouts*; however, the uncertainty does not affect the sense. The expression "out of themselves," which is literally "from above themselves," would seem to favor *spouts* as subject; they receive the oil from the branches above. On the other hand, the grammatical form favors *branches.* **Golden oil**—Literally, *gold.* Not real gold, as some have supposed, but *golden oil,* so called because of its pure brightness; undoubtedly an intentional play upon words, *golden spouts* and *golden oil.*

Verse 13 is almost identical with verse 5. The interpreting angel expresses astonishment that the prophet should fail to understand this part of the vision, but, when the prophet confesses ignorance, he supplies the explanation. **14. The two anointed ones**—Literally, *the two sons of the oil* (compare Isa. v, 1). The last word has the article in Hebrew, the well-known oil, namely, the oil used in official anointings (compare Lev. xxi, 10; 1 Sam. x, 1). There can hardly be any doubt that the two branches symbolize Joshua, the high priest, and Zerubbabel, the prince. If a distinction is made between the symbolic meaning of the two trees and that of the two branches, the trees may be said to symbolize the *offices* of high priest and civil ruler, the branches the *occupants* of the offices. However, such a distinction may not have been intended. The two trees had to be brought in to make possible the introduction of the two *living* branches. The oil is produced by a power behind the branches; in like manner, the two leaders are not the originators of the spirit's power symbolized by the oil; it originates in Jehovah: they are only the channels through which the spirit manifests itself. Some have understood the two branches to signify the Jews and Gentiles respectively, or the believers among these two, or the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, or two angels, but these interpretations are unnatural. **That stand by the Lord of the whole earth**—*Stand by* goes back to the same Hebrew expression as *stand above* in Isa. vi, 2; it indicates an attitude of service, and the whole is equivalent to "who are the servants of the Lord of the whole earth." The idea that in order to do this they are to be removed from earth into heavenly places, "near to God and beyond our ken," is not implied; they are his servants while faithfully discharging the duties of their offices (compare iii, 7).

CHAPTER V.

THEN I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a flying [a]roll. 2 And he said unto me, What seest thou? And I answered, I see a flying roll; the length thereof *is* twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof ten cubits. 3 Then said he unto me, This *is* the [b]curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth: for [1]every one that stealeth shall be cut off *as* on this side according to it; and every one that sweareth shall be cut off

[a] Ezek. 2. 9.—[b] Mal. 4. 6.

[1] Or, *every one of this* people *that stealeth holdeth* himself *guiltless, as it* doth.

CHAPTER V.

The sixth vision—the flying roll, 1-4.

In meaning this vision is similar to the seventh, but there seems insufficient reason for thinking that the two are parts of one and the same vision. The prophet beholds flying through the air an immense roll. He is told by the interpreter that the roll symbolizes the curse of God, and that it will enter the houses of all evil doers and consume them utterly. In iii, 9, is promised the removal of iniquity from the land; this vision indicates one means by which this is to be accomplished, namely, the destruction of the wicked.

1. The introductory formula is similar to that in ii, 1. **A . . . roll**—Among the ancients written documents were preserved in the form of rolls. LXX., omitting the final letter of the Hebrew word, reads "sickle," which would give good sense, but the dimensions given in verse 2 favor the Hebrew text. **Flying**—Moving swiftly from the judgment throne above, where the destruction was decreed, to its destination upon earth.

2. The interpreting angel calls the attention of the prophet to the new vision by means of a question (compare iv, 2, and see references there). The roll was unfolded, so that its immense size could be recognized. **Length . . . twenty cubits . . . the breadth . . . ten cubits**—The measurements of the porch of Solomon's temple (1 Kings vi, 3) and of the holy place in the tabernacle, as it may be determined from Exod. xxvi, and as it is given by Josephus (Antiquities, iii, vi, 4). The exact figures may have been suggested by one or the other of these places, but it is not probable that they possess any special symbolic meaning; all they are intended to do is to indicate the great size of the roll. The Hebrews appear to have used two cubits, one a little longer than the other, but the data are insufficient to determine the exact length of either; the length of the common cubit is estimated at approximately eighteen inches (see Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible,* article "Weights and Measures").

The interpretation is given in verses 3, 4. **This is the curse**—We must think of the roll as inscribed, perhaps upon both sides, with a curse or curses, similar to those in Deut. xxvii, 15-26, and xxviii, 15-68, though there is no reason to suppose that the prophet has in mind these curses. **The whole earth**—Better, R. V., "land." Verse 6 and especially verse 11 clearly show that the reference is to Palestine or Judah, or at the most to the extended Judah (ii, 11). Two classes of criminals are singled out. **Shall be cut off**—The Hebrew verb is used ordinarily in the sense of *acquit, free from guilt;* in this passage most commentators take it in a physical sense, *clear away*—cut off, or destroy (Isa. iii, 26). **On this side**—R. V., "on the one side"; better, margin, "from hence," that is, from the land. **According to it**—According to the curses inscribed upon the roll. Some commentators insist that the more common meaning of the verb should be retained; if that is done the text of the rest of the verse must be changed. Wellhausen reads, "For everyone that stealeth hath for long remained unpunished, and everyone that sweareth hath for long remained unpunished";

as on that side according to it. 4 I will bring it forth, saith the LORD of hosts, and it shall enter into the house of the thief, and into the house of [c]him that sweareth falsely by my name: and it shall remain in the midst of [p]his house, and [d]shall consume it with the timber thereof and the stones thereof.

[c] Lev. 19. 12; chap. 8. 17; Mal. 3. 5.

5 Then the angel that talked with me went forth, and said unto me, Lift up now thine eyes, and see what *is* this that goeth forth. 6 And I said, What *is* it? And he said, This *is* an ephah that goeth forth.

[d] See Lev. 14. 45.

therefore Jehovah is sending his judgment. **Everyone that sweareth**—Must be interpreted in the light of verse 4 as equivalent to "everyone that sweareth falsely by my name." The Old Testament does not condemn swearing *per se*; it condemns only false swearing (compare Hos. iv, 2); Matt. v, 34ff., is on the New Testament level. **I will bring it forth**—Better and literally, *I have caused it to go forth:* it has already started on its mission of judgment. Its destination is the houses of the evil doers. **Shall remain**—Literally, *lodge over night;* but it will not sleep. **Shall consume**—Not only will it announce the judgment, it will execute it. **It**—The house, including the inhabitants. **With the timber thereof and the stones thereof**—That is, utterly.

Only two forms of wickedness are specified, stealing and false swearing. It is hardly likely, however, that these were the only sins recognized or prevalent in the days of Zechariah; it seems better to regard these as types of two *classes* of wickedness, stealing as representing all sins committed against man, false swearing by the name of Jehovah as representing all sins committed against Jehovah. Under these two heads all forms of sin may be grouped, as in the Decalogue. If this is done the vision symbolizes the destruction of sinners of every sort.

The seventh vision—the woman in the midst of the ephah, 5-11.

When the prophet lifts up his eyes again he beholds an ephah, in which is sitting a woman. Its opening is securely fastened with a heavy cover. As the prophet continues to gaze he sees two women with wings lifting up the vessel and carrying it through the air. Upon inquiry he is informed that the woman is to be established in the far-distant Shinar. As the vision unfolds the interpreter points out its symbolical meaning. The woman represents wickedness, which, according to iii, 9, is to be removed from the land. It is fastened securely in the ephah, but to make practically impossible the pollution of the land it is to be removed to the distant Shinar, there to be established forever. This removal will forever free the land from wickedness. It is evident, then, that the seventh vision is a continuation and complement of the sixth.

5, 6. The interpreting angel is the first to appear. **Went forth**—As in ii, 3. The several visions were separated from one another by intervals of inactivity, during which the prophet meditated upon the things seen and heard. During these intervals the angel was lost sight of, but when the moment for a new vision arrived he stood forth. The expression may mean, therefore, simply that the prophet again became aware of his presence. The vision itself is presented in a manner somewhat different from the preceding. Zechariah is exhorted to look; when he does so he becomes conscious of something, but fails to understand what it is; then his companion explains. **This is an ephah that goeth forth**—A free translation would express the thought more clearly, "that which goeth forth (that is, appears, comes into sight) is an ephah." It is difficult to determine the exact capacity of the ephah (see on Amos viii, 5), but,

He said moreover, This *is* their resemblance through all the earth. 7 And, behold, there was lifted up a [2]talent of lead: and this *is* a woman that sitteth in the midst of the ephah. 8 And he said, This *is* wickedness. And he cast it into the midst of the ephah; and he cast the

[2] Or, *weighty piece.*

speaking in general terms, it may be compared to a bushel (compare Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible*, iv, p. 912). Since a measure of the size of a bushel cannot contain a woman, the word must be used here of an ephah-shaped measure, without reference to size.

Recognizing the mysteriousness of the vision, the angel immediately proceeds to explain it. **This is their resemblance through all the earth**—R. V., "This is their appearance in all the land." Of the two, R. V. is to be preferred. Much ingenuity has been expended in the interpretation of this peculiar expression. Two attempts may be mentioned. "The ephah is the shape, that is, represents the figure displayed by sinners in all the land, after the roll of the curse has gone forth over the land; that is, it shows into what condition they have come through that anathema. . . . Just as in a bushel the separate grains are all collected together, so will the individual sinners over the whole earth be brought into a heap, when the curse of the end goes forth over the whole earth" (Keil). A slightly different interpretation is suggested by Perowne: "This, namely, the ephah with all that you will see in the vision regarding it, is the resemblance or representation of the wicked through all the land and of what shall befall them." These are only two out of a great number of suggested interpretations, all of which are more or less artificial and require a stretch of the text and of the imagination. The difficulty is entirely removed if we accept the LXX. reading, "their transgression," for "their resemblance"; the whole clause, "this is their transgression in all the land." The pronoun is explained by "in all the land," equivalent to "the transgression of the inhabitants of all the land." This transgression is symbolized by the ephah and its contents, though the latter have not yet been revealed to the prophet. This translation and interpretation of verses 5, 6 seem to give a satisfactory sense, though it may be admitted that the reading is not as smooth as it might be. The apparent awkwardness of the text leads Nowack and others to alter it so as to read, following *Lift up now thine eyes, and see*—"what is this ephah that goeth forth? And I said, What is it? And he said, That is their transgression in all the land."

7. While the interpreter was still speaking, the cover was lifted from the top of the ephah. **A talent of lead**—Literally, *a circle;* margin, "a round piece" (of lead). The ephah is pictured as round. Now the prophet beholds the contents. **And this is a woman that sitteth in the midst of the ephah**—If the first part of verse 7 is taken as a parenthetical clause (so R. V.), these words are a continuation of verse 6, dependent on "He said moreover." If verse 7 is taken by itself as describing the sight which met the prophet's eyes, a better rendering would be, "And, behold! a round piece of lead was lifted up; and (behold) this! one (lone) woman sitting in the midst of the ephah"; *one woman* is in apposition to *this* (G.-K., 136d, note). It says not "*a* woman," but "*one* woman"; the numeral is used to indicate that nothing else was in the ephah.

8. The interpreter proceeds to explain the significance of the woman. **This is wickedness**—The wickedness of the whole land (verse 6) is personified in the one woman. As the cover is lifted up she begins to rise, but the angel throws her back and makes escape impossible by replacing the lid

weight of lead upon the mouth thereof. **9** Then lifted I up mine eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came out two women, and the wind *was* in their wings; for they had wings like the wings of a stork: and they lifted up the ephah between

[e] Jer. 29. 5, 28.

upon the *mouth*, that is, the opening of the ephah. **Weight of lead**—Literally, *the stone of lead*; synonymous with "round piece of lead" in verse 7.

Verses 9, 10 describe the removal of the ephah from the land. **Then lifted I up mine eyes**—This phrase introduces not a new vision, but a new phase of the same vision. Looking up from the ephah, he beholds two new figures appearing upon the scene. **Two women**—These women have no special symbolical significance; they appear only as the agents appointed to remove the ephah. Women are selected rather than men because a woman is in the ephah, two women because one alone could not have carried the burden. **Wings**—To enable the women to move more quickly, they were supplied with wings. The air would offer fewer obstacles than the land; besides, the wind of heaven might assist creatures flying through the air in their movements. **Like the wings of a stork**—The stork is introduced not because he is an unclean bird (Lev. xi, 19), but on account of the great size of his wings. **The wind was in their wings**—That they might proceed with greater swiftness. **Between the earth and the heaven**—That is, in the air. Thus the women began their journey.

As they move away the prophet inquires where they are going, to which the angel makes answer. 11. **To build it** ["her"] **a house**—The pronoun refers primarily to the ephah, but includes the contents, the woman, for houses are built ordinarily for human beings. The building of a house implies that the stay is to be permanent. **In the land of Shinar**—Babylonia (Gen. x, 10; xi, 2); the home of the long-time enemy of the people of God, the earth and the heaven. **10** Then said I to the angel that talked with me, Whither do these bear the ephah? **11** And he said unto me, To [e]build it an house in [f]the land of Shinar: and it shall be established, and set there upon her own base.

[f] Gen. 10. 10.

the land of exile. Sin, which had brought serious disaster upon Judah, is to be removed to the land of the enemy, there to cause distress and destruction. That the stay is to be permanent is further indicated in the second half of the verse. R. V. is to be preferred: "and when it is prepared, she shall be set there in her own place." **When it is prepared** (R. V.)—That is, the house. **She shall be set there** (R. V.)—The woman (and the ephah). **In her own place** (R. V.)—In the house erected for her use.

CHAPTER VI.

The eighth vision—the four chariots with horses of different colors, 1-8.

In the eighth and last vision the prophet sees coming from between two mountains four chariots drawn by horses of different colors (1-4). According to the present Hebrew text, two were commissioned to go toward the north, and one toward the south; the destination of the fourth is not indicated (see on verse 7). This vision is more obscure than the preceding ones. The interpreting angel informs the prophet (verse 5) that the four chariots are the four spirits (R. V., "winds") of heaven (but see on verse 5), ready to carry out the divine commands; but this interpretation retains a symbolical element: the chariots symbolize divinely appointed messengers (i, 10). The interpretation is expanded in verse 8, which shows that the vision is intended to reveal the fate which is to befall the enemies of the Jews, especially those in the north country (see on Joel ii, 20). When the judgment upon the north country is executed the anger of Jehovah is appeased and his spirit

CHAPTER VI.

AND I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came four chariots out from between two mountains; and the mountains *were* mountains of brass. 2 In the first chariot *were* [a]red horses; and in the second chariot [b]black horses; 3 And in the third chariot [c]white horses; and in the fourth chariot grisled and [1]bay horses. 4 Then I answered [d]and said unto the angel that talked with me, What *are* these, my lord? 5 And the angel

[a] Chap. 1. 8; Rev. 6. 4.—[b] Rev. 6. 5.

[c] Rev. 6. 2.—[1] Or, *strong*.—[d] Chap. 5. 10.

is quieted. This vision, then, like the first, is meant to assure the prophet that Jehovah is about to execute judgment upon the nations hostile to him and to his people (compare Hag. ii, 7).

1. The introductory formula is practically the same as in i, 18; ii, 1; v, 1. **Chariots**—War chariots. The occupants are sent forth to war. **Four**—To be interpreted as in i, 18; they were to be sent to the four points of the compass, that is, in every direction. Attempts to identify the four chariots with four world powers, be they those of Dan. ii, 31-35; vii, 3-7, or any others, are vain. The angel suggests no such identification. The chariots represent the agents—whatever or whoever they may be—ordained by Jehovah to execute judgment upon the nations, and to bring about the "shaking" which was expected to usher in the Messianic era (Hag. ii, 7). **Between two mountains**—The Hebrew has the article, *the* two (well-known) mountains. What mountains were in the mind of the prophet we do not know—some think Mount Zion and Mount Moriah; some, Mount Zion and Mount Olives. The mountains play no further part in the vision, therefore it is immaterial to know what mountains they were; one thing is certain, that they were thought to be near the dwelling place of Jehovah (verse 5). **Of brass**—A symbol of strength and immovableness.

2, 3. The chariots were drawn by horses of different colors. **Red . . . black . . . white . . . grisled and bay**—For the last R. V. reads "grizzled strong." Various symbolical meanings have been suggested for these colors; for example, *red*, the color of blood, has been thought to symbolize war and slaughter, *black*, the color of mourning, the distress following the slaughter. *White* has been thought to symbolize victory, *grizzled* has been taken as equivalent to *pale*, the color of the horse ridden by Death (Rev. vi, 8). Those who take the chariots to symbolize four nations interpret the colors as representing the chief characteristics of the nations alluded to. But these and similar interpretations are fanciful; the colors have no symbolical meaning; they serve only to distinguish the chariots from one another. *Grizzled* means literally *covered with hail*, that is, spotted (Gen. xxxi, 10, 12). The word joined with it, *bay*, or R. V. *strong*, is of uncertain meaning. Since it occurs in connection with several colors, one would expect another color; this is supplied by A. V., but there is little to support the translation *bay*. In Isa. lxiii, 1, a similar word is translated "dyed," margin "crimsoned." Some think, therefore, that the word used here has the same meaning, or that the other was originally in this place. If so, the meaning might be that the ground color was crimson and that on it were the spots. All this is more or less doubtful. Others, who favor the translation *strong*, explain the use of the term by the more difficult task assigned to this chariot (but see on verse 7). The expression remains peculiar, and Wellhausen and others who, on the basis of verses 6, 7, omit *strong* (see on verse 7), may offer the correct solution.

4-7. The prophet, failing to understand the vision, appeals to his companion, who supplies the desired in-

answered and said unto me, [e]These *are* the four [2]spirits of the heavens, which go forth from [f]standing before the Lord of all the earth. 6 The black horses which *are* therein go forth into [g]the north country; and the white go forth after them; and the grisled go forth toward the south country. 7 And the bay went forth, and sought to go that they

[e] Psa. 104. 4; Heb. 1. 7, 14.—[2] Or *winds*.

[f] 1 Kings 22. 19; Dan. 7. 10; chap. 4. 14; Luke 1. 19.—[g] Jer. 1. 14.

formation. **The four spirits of the heavens**—R. V., "the four winds" (compare Jer. xlix, 36). If the R. V. translation is correct one symbol is explained by another which, because of its familiarity, would suggest more readily the significance of the first. The four winds would symbolize the messengers of judgment which are sent by Jehovah in every direction. They go forth from the presence of Jehovah, to whom they have presented themselves to make a report, or to receive their commission. Similarly, the *spirits* of A. V. would be the ministering spirits sent to execute the judgment. It is difficult to choose between the two translations. In every case the context must decide whether the Hebrew word should be translated *spirit* or *wind;* here either gives good sense. More satisfactory than either A. V. or R. V. is a translation first proposed by Wellhausen, "These are going forth *to the four winds of heaven* from standing before the Lord of all the earth." With this translation the subject of "are going forth" is the "four chariots" of verse 1. This translation is in perfect accord with the rules of Hebrew grammar (G.-K., 118d, f.); if it is adopted the peculiarity of explaining one symbol by another is removed, and the reply of the angel becomes one continuous explanation, reaching its climax in verse 8.

The angel, after stating whence the chariots proceed, indicates in verses 6, 7 the commission of each. Again they are distinguished by the color of the horses, but the *red* horses of verse 2 are absent; instead, the adjectives *grizzled strong* or *grizzled and bay* of verse 3 are separated and applied to two different sets of horses. Since there can be no doubt that the chariots of verses 2, 3 are identical with those of verses 6, 7, the colors mentioned here must in some way correspond to those named in the other verses. The *black* and the *white* horses present no difficulty, but when they are disposed of two peculiarities remain, (1) the absence of the *red* horses, (2) the separation of the *grizzled strong* horses into two classes. Much ingenuity has been expended in attempts to remove these difficulties, but when all is said and done it is seen that the attempts are not successful. Two of the ancient versions, Peshitto and Aquila, present a solution; they read *red* instead of *strong* in verse 7 (so margin R. V.), which restores the four colors, black, red, white, grizzled. The error arose first in verse 7; from there a later writer inserted *strong* also in verse 3.

The north country—Babylonia. North is used because the Assyrian and Babylonian armies were accustomed to invade Palestine from the north; in reality Babylonia was east of Judah (ii, 6; see also on Joel ii, 20; compare Jer. i, 14; iv, 6; vi, 1). **After them**—If the present Hebrew text is correct the thought is that the white horses go to the aid of the black (see below). Babylon, as the strongest enemy and the one most guilty, will suffer the severest judgment. **The south country**—The other longtime enemy of Judah, Egypt, was found there; but if Egypt is in the prophet's mind it serves only as a type of all enemies in the south. The *red* (R. V., *bay*) also "went forth," but it is not stated whither they went. The tense is the same as in verse 6; therefore instead of "went forth" we should translate, as in verse 6, "go forth," for the opening words of verse 7 are the continuation of verse 6.

might [h]walk to and fro through the earth: and he said, Get you hence, walk to and fro through the earth. So they walked to and fro through the earth. 8 Then cried he upon me, and spake unto me, saying, Behold, these that go toward the north country have quieted my [i]spirit in the north country.

9 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, 10 Take of *them of* the captivity, *even* of Heldai, of To-

[h] Gen. 13. 17; chap. 1. 10.

[i] Judg. 8. 3; Eccl. 10. 4.

After *go forth* a break should be made, for the succeeding words, "and sought to go . . . ," refer not only to the red horses, but to the horses hitched to all four chariots. They had come forth from between the two mountains, and the angel had pointed out their destinations, but thus far Jehovah had not given the command to go. Now they begin to express their desire to go about their errands, and they receive permission to go. **Get you hence**—Literally, *Go ye.* As soon as the command is given they proceed. The above appears to be the best interpretation of the present Hebrew text; but in view of the reference to the "four winds of heaven" (verse 5) we would expect all four points of the compass to be indicated in connection with the chariots, instead of only two. It has been suggested, therefore, to change *after them* to *toward the west country*, a meaning which Ewald thinks may be gotten from the present Hebrew text, which reads literally, "toward behind them" (see on Joel ii, 20). The red horses would be commissioned to go "toward the east country." With these emendations 6, 7a would read, "The black horses which are therein (in the chariot) go forth into the north country; and the white go forth toward the west country; and the grizzled go forth toward the south country; and the red go forth toward the east country."

8. The greatest enemy of the Jews were the Babylonians, or their successors, the Persians; while their power remained intact there was little hope for a complete restoration. In the first and second visions the prophet had been informed that judgment was about to fall upon that nation; here he is assured once more that the day of judgment is at hand. All the chariots are messengers of judgment, but only the one going toward the north is singled out for further comment. **Have quieted my spirit**—A *prophetic* perfect; the act is still future, but it is so certain that the prophet may speak of it as already accomplished. The *spirit* is the spirit of wrath (Eccl. x, 4), which they are about to quiet, that is, to pacify, by the execution of the judgment (Ezek. v, 13; xvi, 42).

The Symbolical Crowning of Joshua, the High Priest, 9-15.

The series of symbolical visions is followed by a command to perform a symbolical act, which is so closely connected with the preceding visions that it seems best to consider this section a sort of appendix to them. The prophet is urged to adorn the high priest Joshua with a crown made of the silver and gold sent by the exiles from Babylon, and to proclaim him the type of "Branch," who is about to appear in order to complete the temple and to rule over the people. His fame will spread quickly, and those that are afar off will come and join in the building enterprise.

9. **The word of Jehovah came**—Perhaps during the same night. How it came is not stated, perhaps through the interpreting angel.

Verses 10-15 state the contents of the word. That the command was carried out is not stated, but there is no reason why it should not have been. **Of them of the captivity**—Literally, *of the captivity.* Of the exiles still dwelling in Babylon, who through the men named, Heldai, Tobijah, Jedaiah, otherwise unknown, sent their gifts to the temple (compare

bijah, and of Jedaiah, which are come from Babylon, and come thou the same day, and go into the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah; **11** Then take silver and gold, and make [k]crowns, and set *them* upon the head of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest; **12** And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold [l]the man whose name *is* The [m]BRANCH; and he shall [3]grow up out of his place, [n]and he shall build the temple of the LORD: **13** Even

[k] Exod. 28. 36; 29. 6; Lev. 8. 9; chap. 3. 5.—[l] See Luke 1. 78; John 1. 45.—[m] Chap. 3. 8.

[3] Or, *branch up from under him.*—[n] Chap. 4. 9; Matt. 16. 18; Eph. 2. 20–22; Heb. 3. 3.

Ezra vii, 14-16; viii, 26-30). **The same day**—The day belonging to the night in which the revelation came (see on i, 8), equivalent to *this very day.* According to the present Hebrew text these men were lodging in the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah, where the prophet is to meet them. The Hebrew text of 10b is very cumbersome, hence many consider it corrupt. Nowack suggests as an emendation, partly on the basis of verse 14 and partly in order to retain the common meaning of the relative translated *whither,* "Take . . . of Heldai, and of Tobijah, and of Jedaiah, and of Josiah, the son of Zephaniah, who are come from Babylon." The result is a smoother text.

11. **Then take**—R. V., "yea, take of them." Of the men named the prophet is to take the gifts of silver and gold which they have brought. **Make**—Cause to be made (Exod. xxv, 11ff). **Crowns**—Margin R. V. reads the singular, "a crown." The pronoun *them* which follows is not expressed in the Hebrew; it would be just as legitimate to supply the singular *it.* Since only one person is crowned, since a crowning of one person with two crowns seems unnatural, and since the verb "shall be" in verse 14, which belongs to "the crowns," is in the singular, it is better to follow the margin (compare Job xxxi, 36). The plural may indicate that the crown is to be composed of two or more circlets, perhaps one of gold and one of silver. **Joshua**—The same as in iii, 1 (compare Hag. i, 1). Upon his head the crown is to be placed.

The action is explained in verse 12. **Behold the man whose name is The Branch**—The last word is without the article in the Hebrew (see on iii, 8), hence *Branch* is to be regarded as a proper name. It is impossible to identify Branch with the high priest. The context (compare also iii, 8; iv, 7) makes the latter only a type of the former, and in the succeeding clauses attention is called to the antitype, not to the type. **And he**—Branch. **Shall grow up out of his place**—Literally, *from under him;* margin R. V., "and it (or, *they;* the indefinite subject=things, everything) shall grow up (bud forth) under him," that is, under Branch. An obscure expression. The first translation presents the greater difficulties; indeed, no satisfactory explanation has been offered. It is hardly sufficient to say, "compare for the meaning Isa. xi, 1; liii, 2," for the expressions there are of a different character. It is equally difficult to get from the words the idea that Branch will "grow up from the ground out of obscure lowliness." The translation offered in the margin is more satisfactory. The influence of Branch will be beneficial, and under his reign everything will revive and flourish. The promise of prosperity in the Messianic age is one found frequently in the prophetic books (compare Hos. ii, 21, 22; Amos ix, 13; compare Zech. i, 17; ii, 1ff.). **And he**—Branch. **Shall build the temple of Jehovah**—There is no warrant anywhere for making this temple the spiritual temple, the kingdom of God, as distinguished from the temple in Jerusalem, in the building of which Haggai and Zechariah are so deeply interested. The temple mentioned here is no other than the temple of iv, 7.

In verse 13 the promise is repeated

he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he [o]shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and [p]he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.

[o] Isa. 22. 24.

[p] Psa. 110. 4; Heb. 3. 1.

for the sake of emphasis. **He shall bear the glory**—Of royalty. He will be clothed with regal majesty and splendor (compare Isa. ix, 6); he will, indeed, sit on the throne and rule as king. **He shall be a priest upon his throne**—Margin R. V., "there shall be a priest upon his throne." The former translation implies that *Branch* will combine in his person the priestly and kingly offices; the latter simply says that at the time when Branch will rule as king there will also be enthroned a priest, either upon a separate throne or upon the same throne with the ruler. The latter is supported by LXX., which reads "at his right hand" for "upon his throne." The Hebrew permits either translation. Against the second it has been urged that if the high priest is a type of Branch he cannot very well typify a second person, who is to fill his own office. But this objection is by no means conclusive; besides, it is not necessary to think of Joshua as the type of the new high priest. If Zerubbabel is Branch (see below), it is quite probable that Joshua himself is in the mind of the prophet as occupying the high-priestly office in the Messianic era. This is in perfect accord with the teaching of Zechariah elsewhere; he always places Joshua by the side of Zerubbabel; nowhere does he give any hint that the one will supersede the other. To bring out the thought more clearly some insert "Joshua" as the subject: "and Joshua shall be a priest upon his throne," or "by his side" (LXX.). On the whole, the marginal translation seems preferable. The last clause certainly favors the view that two distinct persons are meant. **And the counsel of peace**—There will be peace and harmony between priest and king and they will plan together to promote the peace of the community. **Between them both**—Between priest and king. Those who think that Branch is both king and priest interpret *both* of the two offices. In the past they have been apart, in Branch they will be united in one person, and between the two offices, which apparently pursue different ends, there will be perfect agreement, and both will labor for the same end. This interpretation, however, is less natural. In Psa. cx the Messianic king is represented as combining in his own person the kingly and priestly offices, but this thought seems foreign to Zechariah. Another interpretation makes "between them both" refer to the union between Jehovah and Branch, but this also is unsuitable.

It is not necessary to enumerate the many emendations that have been suggested, for they are not needed, nor do they improve the text. Here, as in iii, 8, Branch must be Zerubbabel, for the task assigned to both is the building of the temple (compare iv, 7ff.). In what sense this and similar passages find their fulfillment in Jesus the Christ is pointed out in the comments on Mic. iv, 1-5, and at the close of the comments on Mic. v, 15. The question may be raised, however, why the crown was not placed upon the head of Zerubbabel, if Zechariah saw in him the Messianic king. The most probable explanation is that the crowning of the civil ruler would have aroused the suspicion of the Persian government and would have invited disaster. The time for such step was not yet ripe. On the other hand, the crowning of the high priest might be looked upon by the authorities as a purely religious ceremony, without any threatening significance, while it would prove a consolation and inspiration to the Jews who were acquainted with the Messianic teaching of the earlier prophets.

14 And the crowns shall be to Helem, and to Tobijah, and to Jedaiah, and to Hen the son of Zephaniah, [q]for a memorial in the temple of the LORD. 15 And [r]they *that are* far off shall come and build in the temple of the LORD, and [s]ye shall know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you. And *this* shall come to pass, if ye will diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God.

[q] Exod. 12. 14; Mark 14. 9.—[r] Isa. 57. 19; 60. 10; Eph. 2. 13, 19.—[s] Chaps. 2. 9; 4. 9.

14. After the performance of the symbolic act the crown is to be preserved in the temple, soon to be completed, as a memorial to the men who brought the gifts out of which it was made, but perhaps also so as to have it in readiness for the time when Zerubbabel himself should be crowned as Messianic king. **Crowns**—See on verse 11. **Helem**—Probably a copyist's error for Heldai (verse 10), which Peshitto has preserved here. **Hen the son of Zephaniah**—Undoubtedly the same person as *Josiah*, the son of Zephaniah, in verse 10. Some commentators take *Hen* to be a second name of the same person; others (so margin R. V.) translate it as a common noun "for the kindness of the son of Zephaniah," that is, for the kindness shown by him in receiving in his house the messengers from Babylon (but see on verse 10). Still others consider Hen a copyist's error for Josiah, and they think that the latter should be read here. Whether the emendation is accepted or not, there can hardly be any doubt that the same person is meant as in verse 10.

15. Branch will not have to depend exclusively upon the few Jews now in Jerusalem to assist him in the building enterprise. **They that are far off shall come and build**—The Jews still in exile, as well as foreigners who will be converted to Jehovah (compare ii, 11; viii, 20-23; Hag. ii, 7, 8). **And ye shall know**—As in ii, 9, 11; iv, 9 (see there). The blessings promised in the symbolical act and in the visions will be theirs only if they diligently obey the words of Jehovah as proclaimed by Haggai and Zechariah, which means, primarily, if they will speedily rebuild the temple. The translation found in the English versions is the only one that can be given of 15b in its present position at the close of the chapter. But the Hebrew reads as if the whole were a protasis with the apodosis dropped out: "And it shall come to pass if ye will diligently obey the voice of Jehovah, your God. . . . " If the apodosis has been lost it is difficult to say what it was.

CHAPTER VII.

RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF MORAL AND CEREMONIAL REQUIREMENTS, vii, 1–viii, 23.

After a silence of nearly two years the voice of Zechariah was heard again. In the fourth year of Darius a deputation came to the prophet inquiring whether the observance of the fasts instituted to commemorate the destruction of Jerusalem was still obligatory (vii, 1-3). This question would suggest itself to many as the temple neared completion, and as the seventy years since the destruction of Jerusalem were drawing to a close. In reply the prophet points out that fasting is not an end in itself, that it is of value only as a means of increasing devotion and piety in the one who practices it (4-6). Then he turns the attention of the delegation to the ethical character of the divine demands, and points out that by disregarding these their fathers had brought upon themselves awful judgments (7-14). Reaffirming Jehovah's jealousy for Zion, he pictures the glory and prosperity in store for Judah and Jerusalem (viii, 1-17). When these glories are realized the question of fasts will solve itself; they will be transformed into seasons of joy and rejoicing, to which multitudes will flock from all parts of the land; even

CHAPTER VII.

AND it came to pass in the fourth year of king Darius, *that* the word of the LORD came unto Zechariah in the fourth *day* of the ninth month, *even* in Chisleu; 2 When they had sent unto the house of God Sherezer and Regem-melech, and

the other nations will gladly join the Jews in their festivities (18-23).

Occasion of the prophetic utterance, 1-3.

1. **Fourth year**—518 B. C. (compare i, 1; see on Hag. i, 1). **The ninth month**—See on Hag. ii, 10, and Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible,* article "Time." The last date mentioned (i, 7) was nearly two years earlier. In this same month two years before Haggai had delivered two messages of promise (Hag. ii, 10-19, 20-23). The order of the words and the construction in Hebrew are peculiar; therefore many are inclined to omit 1b as a later addition and to connect 1a with verse 2 so as to read, "And it came to pass in the fourth year of Darius that *Beth-el* sent."

Verses 2, 3 describe the occasion which called forth the utterance. The translation of verse 2 is uncertain; R. V. reads, "Now they of Beth-el had sent Sharezer and Regem-melech, and their men, to entreat the favor of Jehovah." *Beth-el* (R. V.), though meaning *house of God* (A. V.; compare Gen. xxviii, 19) does not seem to be used of the temple. The form as well as the context require that it should be taken as the name of the well-known town and sanctuary of the northern kingdom, about ten miles north of Jerusalem (see on Amos iv, 4), to which some exiles had returned (Ezra ii, 1, 28). But is it in the nominative or in the accusative (of direction)? Should it be translated "Beth-el sent," or "he sent to Beth-el"? The latter is improbable, for why should anyone send to Beth-el in the postexilic period, when Jerusalem was the only recognized religious center? If the text is correct *Beth-el* must be taken as the subject in the sense of *men of Beth-el* (so R. V.). If so, "Sharezer and Regem-melech" would be the object; the community in Beth-el sent these two men. Then the phrase "*his* men" (English versions read incorrectly the plural *their*) becomes peculiar, for the singular pronoun refers ordinarily to only one individual. This difficulty was evidently felt by the Revisers, for they place in the margin as an alternative, "Now they of Beth-el, even Sharezer, had sent Regem-melech and *his* men." This may be a more accurate reproduction of the Hebrew, but *Sharezer* sounds peculiar in apposition to *they of Beth-el.* Hence some have thought that in the two words *Beth-el* and *Sharezer* (Isa. xxxvii, 38) we have a corruption of what was originally a single proper name, perhaps *Belsharezer,* which is identical with Belshazzar (Dan. v, 1). Then Belsharezer would be the sender of Regem-melech. The former may have been some prominent citizen or official—it has been suggested, though with little probability, that he is no other than Zerubbabel—who, as the representative of the community, sought the advice of the prophets and priests. Others seek to remove the difficulty by taking Beth-el as the subject, Sharezer as the object, and Regem-melech not as a proper name but as an official title. "Now they of Beth-el sent Sharezer, the Regem-melech (friend of the king), and his men." The title is found nowhere else. The present text, no matter how it is translated, presents difficulties. If it is emended the change to "Belsharezer sent Regem-melech and his men" is the most simple. Perhaps all we can say with certainty is that a delegation was sent from somewhere to consult the religious leaders, and that the coming of this delegation was the occasion of the prophet's utterance.

The purpose of the sending of the emissaries was twofold: (1) **To entreat**

their men, [1]to pray before the LORD,
3 *And* to [a]speak unto the priests which *were* in the house of the LORD of hosts, and to the prophets, saying, Should I weep in [b]the fifth month, separating myself, as I have done these so many years?
4 Then came the word of the LORD of hosts unto me, saying,

[1] Heb. *to intreat the face of the LORD*; 1 Sam. 13. 12; chap. 8. 21.—[a] Deut. 17. 9–11; 33. 10; Mal. 2. 7.—[b] Jer. 52. 12; chap. 8. 19.

5 Speak unto all the people of the land, and to the priests, saying, When ye [c]fasted and mourned in the fifth [d]and seventh *month*, [e]even those seventy years, did ye at all fast [f]unto me, *even* to me? 6 And when ye did eat, and when ye did drink, [2]did not ye eat *for yourselves*, and drink *for yourselves*? 7 [3]*Should*

[c] Isa. 58. 5.—[d] Jer. 41. 1; chap. 8. 19.—[e] Chap. 1. 12.—[f] See Rom. 14. 6.—[2] Or, be *not ye they that*, etc.—[3] Or, Are *not* these *the words*.

the favor of Jehovah (R. V.)—Literally, *to stroke the face of Jehovah*, and thus make him favorably inclined. The metaphor seems to have originated at a time when it was customary to stroke or embrace the image of the deity to secure the divine favor. In the general sense of *entreat the favor of* God or man by presents, petitions, or other means the verb is used quite commonly in the Old Testament. (2) **Speak unto the priests . . . to the prophets**—*Speak to* is used in the sense of *consult*. It would seem that the two classes of religious workers possessed at this time equal authority, and that there was peace and good will between them. There is no indication of the opposition which was so prominent in the eighth century, and which appears again in the days of Malachi. **Should I weep in the fifth month**—No matter who was the sender, the question was asked in the name of the community (see verse 5). The fifth month was called *Ab*; on the tenth day of that month the city and temple were given up to the flames (Jer. lii, 12, 13; but compare 2 Kings xxv, 8, 9). In commemoration of this terrible calamity a public fast and mourning was held annually by the later Jews on the ninth of Ab. As the new temple approached completion, many would ask themselves whether this fast and mourning should be continued. **Separating myself**—Abstaining from meat and drink (verse 5).

Fasting not an essential element of true religion, 4–6.

The new revelation (verses 4ff.; see on i, 1) has to do with this inquiry. **5. Unto all the people**—All were interested in the fast, hence all would be interested in the prophet's teaching. **The priests**—They were always the conservatives, the prophets the progressives; the former were prone to emphasize the letter of the law, the latter the spirit, and because they were not bound to the letter they were able to lead the people into new and higher truth, though in doing this they frequently encountered the most bitter opposition of the priests. The new message had to do with the spirit of the law; therefore it was only natural that it should pass from the prophet to the priests, who in turn might pass it on to the people. We have here an illustration of a fact noted by Beecher, "The record represents the prophets as the medium through which the *torah* is given from the deity; the priests as the official custodians and administrators of the *torah*; and both as the expounders and interpreters of *torah*." **The . . . seventh month**—The third day of this month was observed as a day of fasting and mourning in commemoration of the murder of Gedaliah (2 Kings xxv, 25, 26; Jer. xli, 1ff.). **Fifth**—See on verse 3. **Seventy years**—In round numbers, seventy years had elapsed since the fall of the city. **Did ye at all fast unto me**—Was the fast observed as a means of grace by which the people drew closer to God? Was Jehovah benefited in any way by their fasting? The pronoun is repeated for the sake of emphasis (Hag. i, 4). **6. Did not ye eat for yourselves**—Eating is of val-

ye not *hear* the words which the LORD hath cried [4]by the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and in prosperity, and the cities thereof round about her, when *men* inhabited [g]the south and the plain?

8 And the word of the LORD came unto Zechariah, saying, 9 Thus

[4] Heb. *by the hand of*, etc.——[g] Jer. 17. 26.——[h] Isa. 58. 6, 7; Jer. 7. 23; Mic. 6. 8; chap. 8. 16; Matt. 23. 23.——[5] Heb. *Judge judgment of truth.*

ue only to the eater. Jehovah derives no benefit either from their fasting or their feasting, but they should know whether or not the one or the other is useful to them.

The true requirements of Jehovah, 7–14.

The vague answer, in 4–6, though it leaves, for the time being, the question unsolved, opens the way for a discourse, in which the prophet goes to the root of the matter and in which he gives the only true and satisfactory solution. He begins, in verse 7, by calling attention to the things that are of real value in the sight of God. **Should ye not hear the words**—The Hebrew has no verb, but it has been customary to supply it as do the English versions. It seems better, however, to follow LXX., Peshitto, Vulgate, the three most important ancient versions, and read, "Are *these* the words?" The words are given in verses 9, 10, and they form the starting point of an appropriate solution of the problem. **The former prophets**—See on i, 4. **Jerusalem was inhabited**—At the time when all was prosperity, that is, before the exile. **South . . . plain**—R. V., "South . . lowland." The *Negeb* and the *Shephelah*, two of the three divisions of Judah (Josh. xv, 21, 33). The former was in the south, the other took in the foothills between the Central Range and the Maritime Plain. Disobedience to these words caused the loss of prosperity.

Verse 8 is a repetition of verse 4 and should perhaps be omitted; it certainly does not add anything, and verse 9 is the natural continuation of verse 7, for in verse 9 are quoted the words of the former prophets. The introductory phrase of verse 9 also seems superfluous, but it may be a part of the quotation. If it was supplied by Zechariah, it should be translated "thus spake," for it introduces words spoken to past generations. Verses 9, 10 make it clear that the principles of pure and undefiled religion (James i, 27) were the same in the Old Testament period as they are now, love to God and love to fellow men. Zechariah, in this discourse, emphasizes the latter. **Execute true judgment**—Administer justice without respect of persons, according to the merits of the case (Amos v, 24; Hos. xii, 6; Isa. i, 17; compare Isa. v, 23). **Show mercy and compassions**—R. V. reads for the first "kindness." See on Hos. ii, 19; vi, 6; Mic. vi, 8. **Oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor**—All these are persons who cannot defend themselves, and who in many cases have no friends to take their part; therefore they are placed under the special care of Jehovah (Exod. xxii, 21-24), and his followers are enjoined constantly to care for them (Isa. i, 17; Mic. ii, 9; for *the stranger* see on Mal. iii, 5). **Imagine evil**—Plan to do evil (compare viii, 17; Mic. ii, 1; Jer. iv, 14; Prov. iii, 29).

11, 12. The requirements could not have been made plainer, but the attitude of the people was disappointing. **They**—The fathers (i, 4). **Refused to hearken**—They would pay no heed to

speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, [h] [5]Execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassions every man to his brother: 10 and [i]oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; [k]and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart. 11 But they refused to hearken, and [l] [6]pulled

[i] Exod. 22. 21, 22; Deut. 24. 17; Isa. 1. 17; Jer. 5. 28.——[k] Psa. 36. 4; Mic. 2. 1; chap. 8. 17.——[l] Neh. 9. 29; Jer. 7. 24; Hos. 4. 16.——[6] Heb. *they gave a backsliding shoulder.*

away the shoulder, and [7] [m]stopped their ears, that they should not hear. **12** Yea, they made their [n]hearts *as* an adamant stone, [o]lest they should hear the law, and the words which the LORD of hosts hath sent in his spirit [8]by the former prophets: [p]therefore came a great wrath from the LORD of hosts. **13** Therefore it is come to pass, *that* as he cried, and they would not hear; so [q]they cried, and I would not hear, saith the LORD of hosts: **14** But [r]I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations [s]whom they knew not. Thus [t]the land was desolate after them, that no man passed through nor returned: for they laid [u]the [9]pleasant land desolate.

[7] Heb. *made heavy.*——[m] Acts 7. 57.——[n] Ezek. 11. 19; 36. 26.——[o] Neh. 9. 29, 30.——[8] Heb. *by the hand of.*——[p] 2 Chron. 36. 16; Dan. 9. 11.——[q] Prov. 1. 24–28; Isa. 1. 15; Jer. 11. 11; 14. 12; Mic. 3. 4.——[r] Deut. 4. 27; 28. 64; Ezek. 36. 19; chap. 2. 6.——[s] Deut. 28. 33.——[t] Lev. 26. 22.——[u] Dan. 8. 9.——[9] Heb. *land of desire.*

the prophetic exhortations. **Pulled away the shoulder**—Better, with margin R. V., "turned a stubborn shoulder" (Neh. ix, 29). The metaphor is taken from the ox that refuses to have the yoke put upon its neck (Hos. iv, 16). **Stopped their ears**—Literally, *made heavy their ears* (Isa. vi, 10, so that they would not hear. **Their hearts as an adamant stone**—So that no impressions could be made (Ezek. xi, 19). **Lest**—The Hebrew construction is the same as in verse 11, "that not." **Law . . . words**—These two words are used frequently by the prophets as synonyms; the former would be better translated "instruction," or "teaching," as in Isa. i, 10; ii, 3 (see on Hos. iv, 6; compare Amos ii, 4). **Which**—Refers to both law and words. **In his spirit**—Or, *by;* see on Joel ii, 28. **The former prophets**—As in verse 7.

As a result of this disobedience great calamity fell upon the former generations. **Came a great wrath**—Which found expression in judgments (see on Zeph. i, 18, and references there). Though R. V. reproduces more literally the Hebrew of verses 13, 14, A. V. is more successful in expressing the thought. The verses contain no direct threats against the prophet's contemporaries; they describe the fate suffered by the fathers (for the Hebrew tenses compare G.-K., 107b, e), and they teach by implication that a similar attitude on the part of the present generation will bring a similar fate. **As he cried**—Jehovah, through the prophets, in the manner suggested in verses 9, 10. **They**—The fathers, who would not hear. The punishment was according to the *lex talionis.* When the fathers cried for help and deliverance Jehovah would not hearken to them. **I scattered them with a whirlwind**—Suddenly and fiercely (see on Hos. viii, 7; Amos i, 14). **Nations whom they knew not**—The Assyrians and Chaldeans, who, as strangers, had no sympathy or compassion (Jer. xvi, 13; xxii, 28). **After them**—After they were scattered as exiles and fugitives the land became desolate. **No man passed through nor returned**—The country became so waste that no traveler cared to take his course through it (compare ix, 8; Exod. xxxii, 27; 1 Kings xv, 17). **For**—Better, *and so.* **They laid . . . desolate**—The subject may be either the indefinite *they,* the enemies, or the inhabitants of the land who, through their stubbornness and disobedience, attracted the judgment. **Pleasant land**—Literally, *the land of desire.* At one time it was thought a very desirable land, "flowing with milk and honey" (Jer. iii, 19; Deut. viii, 7ff.). After the divine judgment had fallen no one cared to go near it.

CHAPTER VIII.

Imminence of the day of redemption, 1-8.

The introductory formula of viii, 1, does not mark the beginning of a new discourse; it introduces only a new line of thought in the prophecy which

CHAPTER VIII.

AGAIN the word of the LORD of hosts came *to me*, saying, 2 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; [a]I was jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I was jealous for her with great fury. 3 Thus saith the LORD; [b]I am returned unto Zion, and [c]will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem [d]shall be called a city of truth; and [e]the mountain of the LORD of hosts [f]the holy mountain. 4 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; [g]There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand [1]for very age. 5 And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof. 6 Thus saith

[a] Nah. 1. 2; chap. 1. 14.—[b] Chap. 1. 16.—[c] Chap. 2. 10.—[d] Isa. 1. 21, 26.—[e] Isa. 2. 2, 3.

[f] Jer. 31. 23.—[g] See 1 Sam. 2. 31; Isa. 65. 20, 22; Lam. 2. 20, etc.; 5. 11–14.—[1] Heb. *for multitude of days*.

begins in vii, 4. In vii, 6ff., the prophet dwells upon the past; in viii, 1, he turns to the present and from the present outlook he draws a new argument, to show that the observance of the solemn fasts is not essential. In chapter vii he sets forth that in the past Jehovah demanded justice and mercy, not the observance of the external forms; judgment came upon the fathers, because they disregarded the ethical demands of Jehovah; all of which shows that even to-day fasting is of secondary importance. In chapter viii he points out that the time of redemption is at hand, therefore fasting and mourning are no longer needed; they will be changed into seasons of rejoicing.

Verse 2 emphasizes the motive that prompts Jehovah to bestow the new blessings. **Thus saith Jehovah**—Repeated ten times in this chapter, always introducing assurances of divine interest (see on i, 3). **I was jealous**—Better, R. V., "I am jealous" (compare i, 14; see on Joel ii, 18) **For Zion**—Here the entire postexilic community. **With great fury**—Against the enemies of Zion (see on Nah. i, 2). 2b repeats the thought of 2a for the sake of emphasis. Verse 3 introduces the promise of speedy redemption. **I am returned**—The tense may express the idea that Jehovah has already returned and is about to begin his activity on behalf of Zion, or it may be a *prophetic* perfect, which would place the action in the future but would express absolute confidence in the fulfillment of the promise (i, 16; ii, 10ff.). Since the temple, which was to be the dwelling place of Jehovah, was not yet completed, the latter interpretation is to be preferred. Ezekiel had seen the glory of Jehovah departing from Zion before the capture of the city (Ezek. ix, 3; x, 4, 18), but on the completion of the temple Jehovah will return. **In the midst of Jerusalem**—See on Joel ii, 27; iii, 17. **Shall be called**—Among the Hebrews the name serves frequently as a symbol of character; in such cases the calling of anyone by a certain name suggests that he possesses a certain character, hence *to be called* is practically equivalent to *to be* (Isa. i, 26; iv, 3; ix, 6; Ezek. xlviii, 35). **City of truth**—Equivalent to *faithful city* (Isa. i, 21); a city known for its truthfulness and fidelity to Jehovah. **Holy mountain**—Holy because occupied once more by Jehovah (see on xiv, 20; Joel ii, 1).

4, 5. During the early postexilic period the inhabitants of Jerusalem were few in number (Neh. xi, 1ff.); in the new era this will change, for Jerusalem will again swarm with inhabitants (compare ii, 1ff.). **Old men and old women**—Long life is a divine blessing (Exod. xx, 12; Psa. xci, 16; Isa. lxv, 20), which will be enjoyed by many in the new age. **Staff . . . for very age**—Extreme old age will compel them to lean upon staves (compare Isa. xxxvi, 6). **Boys and girls playing**—The wealth of children also is an indication of the divine favor (Psa cxxvii, 3; cxxviii, 3). Free from care and surrounded by peace and prosperity they will joyfully spend their youth. Promises of this

the LORD of hosts; If it be [2]marvelous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, [h]should it also be marvelous in mine eyes? saith the LORD of hosts. 7 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Behold, [i]I will save my people from the east country, and from [3]the west country; 8 And I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: [k]and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, [l]in truth and in righteousness.

9 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; [m]Let your hands be strong, ye that hear in these days these words by the mouth of [n]the prophets, which *were* in [o]the day *that* the foundation of the house of the LORD of hosts was laid, that the temple might be

[2] Or, *hard*, or, *difficult*.——[h] Gen. 18. 14; Luke 1. 37; 18. 27; Rom. 4. 21.——[i] Isa. 11. 11, 12; 43. 5, 6; Ezek. 37. 21; Amos 9. 14, 15.——[3] Heb. *the country of the going down of the sun:* see Psa. 50. 1; 113. 3; Mal. 1. 11.——[k] Jer. 30. 22; 31. 1, 33; chap. 13. 9.——[l] Jer. 4. 2.——[m] Verse 18; Hag. 2. 4.——[n] Ezra 5. 1, 2.——[o] Hag. 2. 18.

nature would have a peculiar significance in those days, in view of the fact that those who returned from exile appear to have been chiefly persons in the full strength of manhood. 6. Jehovah will surely fulfill the promise, though it may seem incredible. A free rendering of 6a would bring out the thought more clearly, "Though that which shall take place in those days may seem too wonderful to the remnant of this people." **The remnant of this people**—Those of the present generation who will live to see the fulfillment of the promises. **In these days**—Points to the time in the future when the promises contained in verses 4, 5 will be fulfilled. **Should it also be marvelous in mine eyes?**—The question presupposes a negative answer. Though the people may think it incredible, there is no limit to the divine power and resources.

7, 8. There will be a restoration more extensive than the return of 537. **My people**—The Jews still in exile (compare ii, 6ff.; Isa. xliii, 5, 6; Jer. xxx, 10). **East . . . west**—Literally, *rising and setting of the sun.* Only two points of the compass are mentioned, though the prophet expects a return from all quarters of the globe (compare Psa. l, 1; Mal. i, 11). All the returning exiles will flock to Jerusalem, the dwelling place of Jehovah, there to worship him as their God (see on Mic. iv, 1-4; Hos. ii, 23). The restoration to fellowship will be sealed with a new covenant (Jer. xxx, 22). **In truth and in righteousness**—See on Hos. ii, 19, 20.

Message of encouragement and admonition, 9-17.

After picturing the future in such glowing colors the prophet turns with words of encouragement to his contemporaries, who might be tempted to lose heart. True, they have suffered much, but now Jehovah is thinking "to do good unto Jerusalem and to Judah" (9-15), if they will keep his commandments (16, 17).

9. The promises already uttered should be an inspiration. **Let your hands be strong**—Equivalent to *be of good courage*; and, being of good courage, they should undertake their tasks fearlessly (Hag. ii, 4; compare Judg. vii, 11; Ezek. xxii, 14). Primarily an exhortation to continue energetically the building of the temple, but also in a more general sense an admonition to face bravely all the difficulties of the present and future. **These words**—Of promise, found in i, 7—vi, 8; viii, 1-8; Hag. ii, 1-23. **The prophets**—Haggai and Zechariah, who are separated from the *former prophets* (i, 4; vii, 7, 12) through the relative clause which closes verse 9. Instead of "in the day" LXX. and Peshitto read "*from* the day," which is more suitable, for the prophets continued their ministrations while the building was progressing. **The foundation**—The laying of the foundation mentioned in Ezra v, 1, 2 (compare Hag. ii, 18). The words "even the temple that it might be built" may have been added by the prophet to show that he is not thinking of the first laying of the foundation

built. **10** For before these days [4]there was no [p]hire for man, nor any hire for beast; [q]neither *was there any* peace to him that went out or came in because of the affliction: for I set all men every one against his neighbor. **11** But now I *will* not *be* unto the residue of this people as in the former days, saith the LORD of hosts. **12** [r]For the seed *shall be* [5]prosperous; the vine shall give her fruit, and [s]the ground shall give her increase, and [t]the heavens shall give their dew; and I will

[4] Or, *the hire of man became nothing*, etc. —[p] Hag. 1. 6, 9, 10; 2. 16.—[q] 2 Chron. 15. 5.

[r] Hos. 2. 21, 22; Joel 2. 22; Hag. 2. 19. —[5] Heb. *of peace*.—[s] Psa. 67. 6.—[t] See Hag 1. 10.

(Ezra iii, 10-12), which came to nothing, but of that which resulted in the erection of the temple. Some omit the words as a later addition.

10. Another ground for being of good courage may be found in the improvement in conditions which has taken place since the people began in earnest the rebuilding of the temple. How different is the present from the past. **Before these days**—Better, R. V., "those." Before the resumption of building operations. **No hire for man, . . . for beast**—No returns were had from labors expended in the cultivation of the soil; there was not enough grown for fodder. **To him that went out or came in**—In following his daily occupation (Deut. xxviii, 6; Psa. cxxi, 8). **Neither . . . any peace**—From within or without. The last clause indicates that the prophet is thinking of troubles and dissensions within the community as well as of attacks from without (compare Ezra iv, 4; Neh. vi, 1ff.). **Affliction**—R. V., "adversary." A. V. is to be preferred. The affliction is the calamity described in Hag. i, 6, 9-11; ii, 16, 17, and the troubles and dissensions mentioned in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah.

11ff. A marvelous transformation is at hand, for Jehovah is about to change his attitude into one of mercy and loving-kindness (compare verses 2, 3). **The residue of this people**—R. V., "the remnant." As in verse 6; or perhaps equivalent to *this remnant of the people*, that is, those who have escaped from exile. **The former days**—Not the days before the exile, but the days before the resumption of the building enterprise (compare verse 10). 12. **The seed shall be prosperous**—An impossible rendering of the Hebrew. R. V., "there shall be the seed of peace." Since *peace* implies prosperity, and since *seed* is sometimes equivalent to seedtime or sowing (Gen. viii, 22) or even to produce or harvest (Job xxxix, 12), Perowne suggests as a free rendering, "the processes of agriculture shall prosper." That this is the thought the prophet desired to express is not improbable; it seems doubtful, however, that he would express it in this ambiguous and obscure manner. This difficulty has been felt by many, and it has been proposed to take the words in apposition to "the vine," which immediately follows—"the seed of peace, the vine, shall give its fruit," equivalent to "the vine, which is the seed or plant of peace, shall give its fruit" (Jer. ii, 21; Ezek. xvii, 5, 6). The vine is thought to be called the seed of peace because it can "flourish only in peaceful times and not when the land is laid waste by enemies" (1 Kings iv, 25; Mic. iv, 4). This translation also is not without its difficulties; it would certainly be unusual to have the appositional clause precede its noun; hence many commentators question the accuracy of the text. Klostermann emends it by transposing one letter from the beginning of the second word to the close of the first, by which he secures the following reading: "*her* seed shall be prosperous," that is, the seed planted by the remnant (in Hebrew a feminine noun). The promise, then, means that the seed will no longer dry up in the ground, but will spring up and bear abundant fruit. Others, following LXX., read, "I will sow prosperity," and they understand the rest of the

cause the remnant of this people to possess all these *things*. 13 And it shall come to pass, *that* as ye were [u]a curse among the heathen, O house of Judah, and house of Israel; so will I save you, and [x]ye shall be a blessing: fear not, *but* [y]let your hands be strong. 14 For thus saith the LORD of hosts; [z]As I thought to punish you, when your fathers provoked me to wrath, saith the LORD of hosts, [a]and I repented not: 15 So again have I thought in these days to do well unto Jerusalem and to the house of Judah: fear ye not.

16 These *are* the things that ye shall do; [b]Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbor; [c]execute the

[u] Jer. 42. 18.—[x] Gen. 12. 2; Ruth 4. 11. 12; Isa. 19. 24, 25; Zeph. 3. 20; Hag. 2. 19.—[y] Verse 9.—[z] Jer. 31. 28.

[a] 2 Chron. 36. 16; chap. 1. 6.—[b] Verse 19; chap. 7. 9; Eph. 4. 25.—[c] Heb. *judge truth, and the judgment of peace.*

verse as explaining how the prosperity is to be brought about. Whatever the exact meaning of the first clause, verse 12 contains a promise of the restoration of the divine blessing. For the rest of the verse see on Hos. ii, 21, 22 (compare Hag. i, 10; ii, 19). Future abundance will compensate for the scarcity of the past, and all will be for *the remnant of this people*. **Dew**—See on Hag. i, 10. 13. **As ye were a curse**—On account of their afflictions they were regarded as cursed of God, and so they became objects of reproach and curses among the nations (compare Joel ii, 17; Jer. xxiv, 9; xxv, 9). **So will I save you**—From the calamity and distress which made them a byword among the nations. **Ye shall be a blessing**—The restoration of the prosperity will be an evidence of the divine favor, hence the people who in the hour of calamity cursed them will call them blessed. In both cases the noun is used in the place of the adjective for the sake of emphasis (G.-K., 141c). A somewhat different interpretation of the promise is suggested by Jer. xxix, 22; Gen. xlviii, 20, namely, that while at one time their name served as a formula of cursing, in the future it will be used as a formula of benediction. **Judah . . . Israel**—The future prosperity is not to be confined to the southern kingdom; all the tribes are to share it. Convinced that these glorious prospects will soon be realized, the prophet repeats his exhortation to be of good courage (verse 9).

Verses 14, 15 emphasize once more the change in the divine purpose; verses 16, 17 call attention to the conditions which must be met, in order to realize the blessings which are the result of this change of attitude on the part of Jehovah. **Punish**—R. V., "do evil." Not moral evil, but calamity (see on Amos iii, 6). Jehovah determined to send calamities as punishment for their sins (Jer. xxxi, 28). **You**—The houses of Israel and Judah (verse 13). Primarily the reference cannot be to the contemporaries of the prophet, since the judgment is said to have been called forth by their fathers' sins. The prophet has in mind the calamity of the exile, from which his contemporaries had not yet fully recovered. **I repented not**—I allowed the judgment to take its course (see on Joel ii, 13; compare Jer. iv, 28). As Jehovah purposed to execute judgment and firmly adhered to his purpose, so he purposes now to restore his favor, and he will just as firmly adhere to the new purpose. **Do well**—The very opposite of *do evil* (verse 14); he will restore blessing and prosperity. **Jerusalem . . . Judah**—Though the blessings will reach all (verse 13), the prophets always represent Jehovah as sustaining a peculiarly close relation to Jerusalem and Judah (compare i, 17; ii, 12). **Fear ye not**—With the divine good will assured, no one can harm them.

16, 17. The conditions on which these blessings may be secured are essentially the same as those proclaimed by the earlier prophets (see on vii, 9, 10). **Speak . . . truth**—Without truthfulness among its members no community can prosper per-

judgment of truth and peace in your gates: **17** [c]And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbor; and [d]love no false oath: for all these *are things* that I hate, saith the LORD.

18 And the word of the LORD of hosts came unto me, saying, **19** Thus saith the LORD of hosts; [e]The fast of the fourth *month*, [f]and the fast of the fifth, [g]and the fast of the seventh, [h]and the fast of the tenth, shall be to the house of Judah [i]joy and gladness, and cheerful [7]feasts; [k]therefore love the truth and peace. **20** Thus saith the LORD of hosts; *It shall* yet *come to pass*, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities: **21** And the inhabitants of one *city* shall go to another, saying, [l]Let us go [8] [9]speedily [10]to pray before the LORD, and

[c] Prov. 3. 29; chap. 7. 10.——[d] Chap. 5. 3, 4.——[e] Jer. 52. 6, 7.——[f] Jer. 52. 12, 13; chap. 7. 3, 5.——[g] 2 Kings 25 25; Jer. 41. 1, 2.——[h] Jer. 52. 4.——[i] Esth. 8. 17; Isa. 35. 10.

[7] Or, *solemn*, or, *set times*.——[k] Verse 16.——[l] Isa. 2. 3; Mic. 4. 1, 2.——[8] Or, *continually*.——[9] Heb. *going*.——[10] Heb. to *intreat the face of the LORD*; chap. 7. 2.

manently. **Execute the judgment of truth and peace**—Margin R. V., more literally, "judge truth and the judgment of peace." *Judge truth* is equivalent to give true and righteous judgment (see on vii, 9); *the judgment of peace* is "such an administration of justice as tends to promote peace and establish concord between those who are at strife." Some commentators omit the second *truth* as an erroneous repetition suggested by vii, 9. **In your gates**—The place where justice was administered (see on Amos v, 10; compare 2 Sam. xv, 2; Deut. xxi, 19). **Let none . . . imagine evil**—See on vii, 10. **Love no false oath**—See on v, 3. All these things Jehovah hates, and therefore he is bound to punish them (compare Amos v, 21).

Fasting and mourning will be changed into joy and glory, 18-23.

The emphasis upon the real requirements of Jehovah and the promise of a speedy redemption (vii, 4; viii, 17) would suggest a solution of the problem raised in vii, 3; in viii, 18-23, the prophet gives a direct answer: the fasts will give place to "joy and gladness and cheerful feasts" (19), because the blessing and favor of Jehovah will be restored to the people (20-23).

Verse 18 is identical with verse 1. 19. **The fast of the fourth month**—The fast kept in commemoration of the capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar on the ninth day of the fourth month (Jer. xxxix, 2; lii, 7). **Fifth . . . seventh**—See on vii, 4. **Tenth**—A fast held to commemorate the beginning of the siege on the tenth day of the tenth month (Jer. xxxix, 1; 2 Kings xxv, 1). **Joy . . . gladness, . . . cheerful feasts**—The seasons commemorating the darkest events of Jewish history will become occasions of joy and festivity, because the new blessings of the divine grace will be so rich and so superior to those of the past that the Jews will entirely forget the sorrows of the past. But these blessings can be experienced only if the conditions laid down in verses 16, 17 are met, some of which the prophet reiterates. **Love the truth and peace**—They must exert their efforts on behalf of truthfulness and concord (see on verse 16).

Verses 20-23 indicate the magnitude of the future glory. The manifestations of Jehovah will be so marvelous that they will impress even foreign nations with the reality of the power and supremacy of Jehovah, and will attract them to Jerusalem, where they may properly worship him (compare Isa. ii, 2-4; Mic. iv, 1-4; Jer. xvi, 19). **People**—Better, R. V., "peoples"; that is, whole nations. **Many cities**—Scattered throughout many lands. For "many" margin suggests "great," that is, populous. Verse 21 describes the enthusiasm with which people will exhort one another to seek Jehovah (compare Isa. ii, 3). **Pray**—R. V., "entreat the favor." See on vii, 2.

to seek the LORD of hosts: I will go also. 22 Yea, [m]many people and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD. 23 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days *it shall come to pass*, that ten men shall [n]take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard [o]*that* God *is* with you.

[m] Isa. 60. 3, etc.; 66. 23.

[n] Isa. 3. 6; 4. 1.—[o] 1 Cor. 14. 25.

Seek Jehovah—As in Amos v, 4 (see there). **I will go also**—Not an expression of determination on the part of Zechariah to go to Zion to witness the glorious scenes, but the reply of the other city to the exhortation of the first.

Verse 22 is an emphatic repetition of the thought of verse 21, as is also verse 23. The Jews, now despised by the surrounding nations, will be honored in that day as mediators between these very nations and Jehovah, and they will be entreated by the former to secure the favor of their God. In great numbers the foreigners will crowd around the Jews, anxious to be admitted into fellowship with them, so that through them they may be admitted into fellowship with Jehovah. **Ten men**—An expression denoting an indefinite, moderately large number, like *seven* in Isa. iv, 1, and the colloquial *a dozen*. **Shall take hold**—Repeated for the sake of emphasis (compare vi, 10, 11); anxiously they will press forward to take hold. **All languages**—Should perhaps be read, "from all languages and all nations" (compare Isa. lxvi, 18); from nations speaking many different languages. **Skirt**—Literally, *wing* (compare Hag. ii, 12); equivalent to *border of the garment* (Matt. ix, 20). **We will go**—Better, cohortative, *let us go*. **We have heard**—Through the mighty works of Jehovah. **God**—Since the speakers are foreigners, they do not use the covenant name Jehovah.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FINAL TRIUMPH OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD, ix, 1–xiv, 21.

With ix, 1, begins the second main division of the Book of Zechariah, which consists of various oracles, loosely connected, dealing for the most part with events leading up to the final triumph of the kingdom of God. It opens with an announcement of the overthrow of the nations surrounding Palestine (ix, 1-8), which will prepare the way for the advent of the Messianic king (9, 10) and the restoration and exaltation of the exiled Jews (11-17). This restoration is described more fully in x, 1–xi, 3. The promises are followed by an allegory which is intended to warn the people that the realization of the glorious promises depends upon their attitude toward Jehovah (xi, 4-17, + xiii, 7-9). The remaining portion of the book naturally falls into two parts. The first (xii, 1–xiii, 6) opens with a picture of a marvelous deliverance of Judah and Jerusalem (xii, 1-9); but this triumph is only the preparation for the bestowing of rich spiritual gifts. In order to enjoy these fully, they must pass through a process of spiritual preparation (10-14). Then Jehovah will remove all spiritual uncleanness, and a life of intimate fellowship with Jehovah will ensue (xiii, 1-6). In chapter xiv the prophet pictures a new conflict between Jerusalem and the nations. At first the latter will be successful, then Jehovah will interfere, save a remnant, and set up his kingdom upon earth (1-7). From Jerusalem he will dispense blessing and prosperity (8-11); the hostile nations will be smitten and their treasures will become the possession of the Jews (12-15). Those who escape will turn to Jehovah (16); any who fail to do him proper homage will be smitten with drought (17-19), but Judah and Jerusalem will be holy unto Jehovah (20, 21).

CHAPTER IX.

THE [a]burden of the word of the LORD in the land of Hadrach,

[a] Jer. 23. 33.——[b] Amos 1. 3.

Judgment upon the surrounding nations; preservation of Jerusalem, 1-8.

A judgment, proceeding from the north or northeast, will fall in succession upon Syria, Phœnicia, and Philistia (ix, 1-7). While these nations are wiped out, Jerusalem will rest in safety (8).

1. **Burden**—For the meaning of the word see on Nah. i, 1. Its construction in the sentence is obscure. The English translation makes it a part of the title (compare xii, 1), "The burden of the word of Jehovah in [better, R. V., "upon"] the land of Hadrach"; the rest of the verse it takes as the beginning of the oracle itself. But even the English reader can see that the result is an exceedingly awkward sentence. It seems better to take "burden," which is without article in Hebrew, by itself as the title, "A burden," or "An oracle," and to begin the oracle itself with "The word of Jehovah." In 1b the translation of margin R. V. is to be preferred. With these changes verse 1 will read, "An oracle: The word of Jehovah shall be upon the land of Hadrach, and Damascus shall be its resting place; for Jehovah hath an eye upon men and upon all the tribes of Israel." The title may not be in its original form; with "burden" or "oracle" may have been connected originally the name of the author and, perhaps, of the subject of the prophecy; but these names had disappeared when the oracle fell into the hands of the compiler (p. 589). **The word of Jehovah**—See on Hos. i, 1. **Hadrach**—In ancient and even more recent times, previously to the discoveries of archæology, *Hadrach* received various interpretations; some took it as a name of the Messiah, some as the name of an otherwise unknown Syrian king, or of a deity; but archæology has placed it beyond reasonable doubt that it is the name of a city called *Ḥatarika* in the Assyrian inscriptions, mentioned in connection with Damascus and other cities of Syria; hence it is quite likely that it should be located in the north. Wellhausen suggests the region around the later Antioch. **Damascus**—See on Amos i, 3. **Its resting place** (R. V.)—Damascus is the goal of the divine word of judgment; there it will fall with destructive force.

and [b]Damascus *shall be* the rest thereof: when [c]the eyes of man, as of all the tribes of Israel, *shall be*

[c] 2 Chron. 20. 12; Psa. 145. 15.

The rest of the verse appears to be a parenthetical clause, stating the reason why the word has gone forth. As already indicated, the marginal translation is to be preferred. **Jehovah hath an eye** (margin R. V.)—Nothing is hidden from the eyes of Jehovah, hence he knows what each individual nation deserves. **Man . . . Israel**—His interest is worldwide, it is not confined to Israel (Amos ix, 7; Jer. xxxii, 19, 20). In this case he has seen the wrong done by men to Israel, therefore he will send judgment upon the evil doers, represented by Hadrach and Damascus. Though this interpretation is not impossible, the text of 1b is considered corrupt by many commentators, and various emendations have been suggested. Instead of *man*, Heb. *ādhām*, many read *Syria*, Heb. *arām*, which involves the interchange of two letters which are not infrequently confused in the Old Testament; for *eyes* many read *cities* or *people*, which again involves only a slight change. With these changes 1b would read, "For Jehovah's are the cities (or people) of Syria as well as all the tribes of Israel." These emendations would not alter the thought materially. Some go further; they omit "as well as all the tribes of Israel," and join the remaining words of 1b closely with verse 2: "For

toward the LORD. 2 And [d]Hamath also shall border thereby; [e]Tyrus, and [f]Zidon, though it be very [g]wise. 3 And Tyrus did build herself a strong hold, and [h]heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets. 4 Behold, [i]the Lord will cast her out, and he will smite [k]her power in the sea; and she shall be devoured with fire. 5 [l]Ashkelon shall see *it*, and fear; Gaza also *shall see it*, and be very sorrow-

[d] Jer. 49. 23.—[e] Isa. 23; Ezek. 26, 27, 28; Amos 1. 9.—[f] 1 Kings 17. 9; Ezek. 28. 21; Obad. 20.

[g] Ezek. 28. 3, etc.—[h] Job 27. 16; Ezek. 28. 4, 5.—[i] Isa. 23. 1.—[k] Ezek. 26. 17.—[l] Jer. 47. 1, 5; Zeph. 2. 4.

Jehovah's are the cities of Syria, and Hamath also, which bordereth thereon"; which gives good sense. The present Hebrew text of verse 1 sounds rather peculiar, and it may be corrupt, but, if so, it is not possible to speak with certainty concerning its original form. Marti reads verses 1, 2 as follows: "Burden of the word of Jehovah: Jehovah is in Hadrach, and Damascus is his resting place; for Jehovah's are the cities of Syria, and Hamath also which bordereth thereon; Tyre and Sidon, because they are very wise."

If the present text is retained verse 2 is the continuation of 1a. Hamath also shall be the resting place of the word of Jehovah. **Hamath**—See on Amos vi, 2 (compare Ezek. xlvii, 16). **Tyrus** ["Tyre"] . . . **Zidon**—The two chief cities of Phœnicia (see on Joel iii, 4; compare Amos i, 9; Ezek. xxvi, 2; xxviii, 21). **Though it be very wise**—R. V., "because they are very wise." The latter expresses the thought that the boast in their great wisdom (Ezek. xxviii, 1ff.) provokes the divine judgment; A. V., on the other hand, expresses the idea that all their wisdom will not be sufficient to save them. R. V. is more accurate and is favored by the context. The latter is undoubtedly right in applying *wise* to both cities (so LXX.), though the Hebrew text applies it only to Zidon.

Tyre was the more important of the two; during the greater part of Phœnician history it was the real capital and representative of Phœnicia (compare Amos i, 9), therefore it alone is spoken of in verses 3, 4. In verse 3 is given an illustration of the wisdom of Tyre. **A stronghold**—According to ancient testimony Tyre was built originally on the mainland; later it was transferred to a neighboring rocky island (compare Ezek. xxvi, 3, 4), where it was strongly fortified, so that it became almost impregnable. **Silver . . . fine gold**—Secure from hostile attacks, Tyre heaped up immense treasures (Ezek. xxviii, 4, 5). But her power and wealth will not continue. **Cast her out**—R. V., "dispossess her"; which is a threat that Jehovah will rob her of her wealth and make her poor (1 Sam. ii, 7). **Power**—Not fortifications, but, as in Ezek. xxviii, 4, 5, equivalent to *riches*, and all the strength and influence derived from these **Devoured with fire**—The city herself, her palaces, storehouses, and magnificent buildings, will go up in flames (compare Amos i, 10). To secure a climax some translate the first verb "conquer," as frequently in the Old Testament. This gives the order *conquer, smite her riches, devour the city.*

The divine executioner is evidently thought of as coming from the north or northeast. Syria, represented by Hadrach, Damascus, and Hamath, will be the first to suffer, then powerful Phœnicia; from there he will pass down the Maritime Plain and fall upon Philistia. With the strong Phœnician cities gone, nothing can prevent the further advance of the enemy; therefore Philistia may well tremble.

5. **Ashkelon . . . Gaza . . . Ekron . . . Ashdod**—Four of the five chief cities of Philistia. Here as in Amos i, 6-8; Zeph. ii, 4; Jer. xxv, 20, Gath is omitted (see further on Amos i, 6-8). The order in which the cities are mentioned here is the same as in Jer. xxv, 20, which passage may be

ful, and Ekron; for her expectation shall be ashamed; and the king shall perish from Gaza, and Ashkelon shall not be inhabited. 6 And a bastard shall dwell [m]in Ashdod, and I will cut off the pride of the Philistines. 7 And I will take away his [1]blood out of his mouth, and his abominations from between his teeth: but he that remaineth, even he, *shall be* for our God, and he shall be as a governor in Judah, and Ek-

[m] Amos 1. 8.

[1] Heb. *bloods.*

in the mind of the prophet. **Shall see . . . fear**—Only with Ashkelon are both these verbs found; *shall see it* must be supplied with Gaza, and *shall see it and fear* with Ekron. The cities will see the destruction of the northern cities and they will be afraid that a similar fate will befall them. **Very sorrowful**—R. V., "sore pained"; or, *tremble greatly* in terror. **For her expectation shall be ashamed**—R. V., "shall be put to shame." These words explain the terror. What is asserted of Ekron was equally true of the other Philistian cities. They expected the strong cities in the north to hold out; as long as they did so the Philistines had nothing to fear, but their fall will bring to naught all hopes and expectations. Their fear is well founded, for the enemy will soon be upon them. **The king shall perish from Gaza**—Gaza will lose her independence. **Ashkelon shall not be inhabited**—The population will be destroyed or carried into exile.

6. The full-blooded Philistines will be displaced by a mixed race. **A bastard**—Margin R. V., "a bastard race." An obscure phrase. In Deut. xxiii, 2, the word denotes one who is not a full-blooded citizen, one with whose birth a blemish of some sort is connected. Here it seems to denote a race which, from the view point of the Philistines, is not full-blooded, a foreign or mixed race. The term implies nothing concerning the moral character of the new population. **Ashdod**—What is true of one city is true of the whole land. **The pride of the Philistines**—The judgment implied in 6a will be sufficient to bring to an end the pride and haughtiness of the Philistines; they will be completely humiliated.

7. The new population will not continue the attitude of hostility maintained for so many centuries by the Philistines; on the contrary, in time it will be incorporated into the Jewish nation. **His . . . he**—These pronouns in verse 7 refer to the new population. **Blood**—According to the law the blood belonged to the deity; it was not lawful for the worshiper to eat it (Lev. xvii, 12; xix, 26; compare Ezek. xxxiii, 25). The eating of blood indicates ignorance or willful transgression of the law of Jehovah. Though temporarily the new inhabitants may live contrary to the divine law, in the end Jehovah will draw them unto himself, when they will cease to eat the blood. **Abominations**—This word is used of idols themselves, here apparently of the flesh of sacrificial animals offered to idols (Num. xxv, 2). The eating of this flesh will be discontinued. The two expressions look forward to a time when idolatry will be completely abolished.

R. V. presents a more satisfactory translation of 7b: "and he also shall be a remnant for our God; and he shall be as a chieftain in Judah, and Ekron as a Jebusite." **A remnant for our God** (R.V.)—The *remnant* consists of the true worshipers of Jehovah (see on Amos v, 15); the new inhabitants of Philistia will become such a company. The complete incorporation into the Jewish nation is predicted in the rest of the verse. **As a governor in Judah**—R. V., "chieftain." The word translated "chieftain" or "governor" is used of the head of a thousand (compare Zech. xii, 5). Here it denotes not the leader, but the division over which he rules (Mic. v, 2), and

ron as a Jebusite. 8 And [n]I will encamp about mine house because of the army, because of him that passeth by, and because of him that returneth: and [o]no oppressor shall pass through them any more: for now [p]have I seen with mine eyes.

9 [q]Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, [r]thy King cometh unto thee: he *is* just, and [2]having salva-

[n] Psa. 34. 7; chap. 2. 5.——[o] Isa. 60. 18; Ezek. 28. 24.——[p] Exod. 3. 7.——[q] Isa. 62. 11; chap. 2. 10; Matt. 21. 5; John 12. 15.——[r] Jer. 23. 5; 30. 9; Luke 19. 38; John 1. 49.——[2] Or, *saving himself.*

the thought is that Philistia will become just like one of the divisions of Judah, that is, an integral part of the nation. A slight alteration, *'eleph* for *'alluph*, would bring out the thought more clearly, since the former denotes the division itself (Judg. vi, 15; 1 Sam. x, 19). **Ekron**—Represents, like Ashdod in verse 6, all Philistia. **As a Jebusite**—Not the Jewish inhabitants of Jerusalem, but the Canaanitish inhabitants of Jebus, who after the conquest of their stronghold by David were in time incorporated into the Jewish nation, so that they became an integral part of the same.

Some consider verse 8 the beginning of the new section. It seems preferable, however, to connect it with verses 1-7. While the judgment falls upon the nations, Jerusalem will enjoy the protecting care of Jehovah. **About mine house**—Literally, *for my house*; that is, for the protection of my house. *House* denotes here not the temple, but the whole land (see on Hos. viii, 1). **Because of the army**—R. V., "against the army." With either translation the thought is that Jehovah will be around his land to protect it against foreign invasions. Another possible translation is "without an army"; Jehovah will not employ an army of soldiers (compare ii, 5). The word translated "army" is written peculiarly in Hebrew; this, taken in connection with the fact that LXX. does not agree with the Hebrew, has led many to substitute the LXX. reading, "as a garrison" (so margin R. V.). **Because of him that passeth by**—Better, R. V., "that none pass through or return." Jehovah will guard the borders so carefully that no invader can cross them. **Oppressor**—In Exod. iii, 7, and other places the same word is translated "taskmaster." From such taskmasters the Jews suffered again and again, but their staves will be broken. Why, is indicated in the last clause. **For now have I seen with mine eyes**—The afflictions suffered by the Jews and the cruelties perpetrated by the oppressors. Of these Jehovah will now make an end.

The appearance of the Messianic king, 9, 10.

The overthrow of the nations (verses 1-7) will prepare the way for the coming of the Messianic king, who will establish his throne in Zion and rule in righteousness and peace over the redeemed remnant. The king has no part in the overthrow of the hostile powers (Isa. ix, 1-7); this Jehovah himself will accomplish; only after the nations are overthrown will the king make his appearance.

In verse 9 Zion is called upon to welcome the king. **Rejoice greatly . . . shout**—The repetition is for the sake of emphasis; there is every reason for the greatest enthusiasm. **Daughter of Zion . . . Jerusalem**—The expressions are synonymous, and refer to the inhabitants of Jerusalem (see on ii, 7). **Thy King**—The Messianic king mentioned so frequently in the prophetic writings (compare Isa. ix, 1-7; Mic. v, 1ff., etc.; see at the close of the comments on Mic. v, 15). **Unto thee**—To set upon his throne there. 9b describes the king's character and coming. **Just**—Or, *righteous*; both in his own personal life and in his administration (compare Isa. ix, 7; xi, 3, 4). **Having salvation**—Margin R. V., "saved." It is difficult to repro-

tion; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass. **10** And I [s]will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak [t]peace unto the heathen: and his dominion *shall be* [u]from sea *even* to sea, and from the river *even* to the ends of the earth. **11** As for thee also, [3]by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy

[s] Hos. 1. 7; 2. 18; Mic. 5. 10; Hag. 2. 22.—[t] Eph. 2. 14, 17.—[u] Psa. 72. 8.

[3] Or, *whose covenant* is *by blood*, Exod. 24. 8; Heb. 10. 29; 13. 20.

duce the exact sense of the Hebrew by one single word. The thought is that the king will enjoy at all times the divine help and favor, so that all he undertakes will prosper. **Lowly**—Literally, *oppressed*, or, *afflicted*. Because he himself will be of lowly estate he will be able to sympathize fully with those in similar condition. His interest will not be confined to the noble and wealthy. **Riding upon an ass**—The animal of peace; not upon a horse, which is the animal of war and royalty. The use of the ass is an indication of the peaceful character of the Messianic rule, and of the unpretentious character of the rider. The rest of the verse describes the ass more definitely as a young animal, but there is no special significance in the addition (Matt. xxi, 2). It is interesting to compare with this passage Jer. xvii, 25; xxii, 4).

10. During the era of peace there will be no use for war implements, hence Jehovah—not the Messianic king—will destroy them (Isa. ii, 4; ix, 5; Mic. v, 10, 11). **Chariot . . . horse . . . battle bow**—These represent all implements of warfare. **Ephraim, . . . Jerusalem**—The new nation will be composed of elements representing both kingdoms. Ephraim=Israel; Jerusalem=Judah. That Jehovah himself will do these things is in perfect accord with other Messianic utterances (Isa. ix, 5; Mic. v, 10); hence there is no good reason for altering the text so as to read, "and he will cut off." **Speak peace**—His word will be of sufficient weight to maintain peace among the nations. This implies that his authority will be acknowledged not only by the Jews, but by other nations as well (Isa. ii, 4), a thought emphasized in the next clause (compare Psa. lxxii, 8; Mic. vii, 12). **From sea . . . to sea**—Not as in Amos viii, 12, where the author is thinking only of Palestine. The territory over which the Messianic king will rule is more extensive. One sea is probably the Mediterranean; the other, the ocean thought to mark the end of the earth in the opposite direction. **The river**—As often, the Euphrates. **The ends of the earth**—The vaguely defined regions in the extreme west. These expressions are not to be interpreted in a strictly literal sense; they are used simply to indicate the unlimited extent of the Messianic kingdom.

Deliverance and exaltation of the exiled Jews, 11-17.

The advent of the Messianic king will be followed by a restoration of the Jews still in exile, and their exaltation to highest glory.

In verses 11, 12 deliverance is promised to the captives. **As for thee**—The daughter of Zion (verse 9). **Also**—Is to be taken not with *thee*, but with the verb: "As for thee, I have also sent forth." In addition to the blessings promised in verses 9, 10 Jehovah will set free the captives (G.-K., 153). **By the blood of thy covenant**—R. V., "because of the blood of thy covenant." Made at the time of the exodus (compare Exod. xxiv, 8), and kept alive throughout the entire history by means of sacrifices and offerings. To this covenant, and even to the earlier covenant with Abraham, Jehovah will remain true, and because of it he will bring back the scattered exiles. **I have sent forth**—Better, R. V., "I have set free." The tense is the perfect of prophetic

[x]prisoners out of the pit wherein *is* no water.

12 Turn you to the strong hold, [y]ye prisoners of hope: even to day do I declare *that* [z]I will render double unto thee;

[x] Isa. 42. 7; 51. 14; 61. 1.

13 When I have bent Judah for me, filled the bow with Ephraim, and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece, and made thee as the sword of a

[y] Isa. 49. 9.—[z] Isa. 61. 7.

certainty, equivalent to "I shall surely set free." **Thy prisoners**—Prisoners of war and exiles in foreign lands (Joel iii, 1ff.; Obad. 20). **Out of the pit**—The place of imprisonment (Exod. xii, 29; Jer. xxxvii, 16). **Wherein is no water**—This adds to the horrors. Death stares the prisoners in the face. The whole is a picture of the horrors of an enforced exile.

In verse 12 the prophet turns directly to the prisoners, exhorting them to return, for the time of their deliverance is at hand. **Turn**—Better, margin R. V., "Return." **Stronghold**—Where they may find safety from the enemy; here, the promised land, where they will be under the protection of Jehovah (verse 8). **Prisoners of hope**—Since they are members of the covenant nation (verse 11), their depressed condition cannot continue forever; though in exile, they may live in hope of a restoration. Israel is preëminently a nation of hope. The promise of deliverance is followed by another. **I will render double**—There will be a twofold recompense for all loss and affliction (compare Isa. lxi, 7; xl, 2). **Unto thee**—If the text is correct Zion is addressed as in verse 11; however, the change is surprising; one would expect "unto you." **Even today**—In the face of all the difficulties which seem to make fulfillment impossible.

13-17. When the exiles have been restored to their homes they will enter upon an era of conquest (Amos ix, 12); under the leadership of Jehovah himself they will triumph over all their enemies, and subsequently they will be exalted to glory and honor (compare the more peaceful picture in verses 9, 10).

The constructions of verse 13 are peculiar; hence the translation and interpretation of details are more or less obscure, but the general thought is clear, which is that Jehovah will use the restored exiles as weapons in the conflict with the hostile nations. This thought is expressed in very bold figures. **When**—Better, R. V., "For"; which connects verse 13 with verse 12. **Judah . . . Ephraim . . . Zion**—The last name seems to include the entire restored community, which consists of elements representing the northern and southern kingdoms, called respectively Ephraim and Judah. **Have bent**—All the tenses in verse 13 should be rendered as future tenses; R. V. so renders the last two; the others are *prophetic* perfects. **Bent**—Literally, *tread down*. The large bows were bent by putting one end upon the ground and holding it with the foot, while the other end was being bent with the hand. The English translation of the first two clauses follows the Hebrew accentuation, but it seems preferable to follow the construction of most of the ancient versions and take *bow* with *Judah* in the first clause, "for I will bend for me Judah as a bow," and the second clause, "and I will fill it with Ephraim." Judah is to be the bow, Ephraim the arrow. **Raised up**—Better, R. V. "I will stir up"; to battle. This seems the only natural rendering of the verb in this place. In 2 Sam. xxiii, 18; 1 Chron. xi, 11, 20, where it has the meaning *to wield, to swing*, that is, a spear, the noun *spear* is added. By itself the verb does not have the meaning *to wield for a spear*. **Against thy sons, O Greece**—Heb. *Yawan*. Not a district in southern Arabia, but Greece (Joel iii, 6), which is thought of here as a representative world power (see Introduction, p.

mighty man. 14 And the LORD shall be seen over them, and [a]his arrow shall go forth as the lightning:

[a] Psa. 18. 14; 77. 17; 144. 6.

and the Lord GOD shall blow the trumpet, and shall go [b]with whirlwinds of the south. 15 The LORD

[b] Isa. 21. 1.

583); as such it represents all powers hostile to Zion. The sons of Greece are the Greeks. The direct address to the hostile power is peculiar; nowhere else in the context is the enemy addressed, but always the chosen people. We may be justified, therefore, in reading, with several of the ancient versions, "against the sons of Greece."

Kirkpatrick proposes the omission of "against thy sons, O Greece," because (1) the definiteness of the allusion to Greece is unlike the generality which in the main characterizes the passage; (2) the enemy is not addressed elsewhere in the text; (3) nothing could have been more natural than the insertion of such a gloss in the Maccabean times. (4) The differences of reading between LXX. and Targum. The former reads, "against the sons of Greece"; the latter, "against the sons of the peoples." (5) The gain to the rhythm. (6) The rendering *to stir up* interrupts the metaphors. He reads verse 13:

> For I bend Judah for a bow,
> Lay Ephraim on it for an arrow,
> Wield thy sons, O Zion, for a spear,
> And make thee as a hero's sword.

This is a very smooth reading, but can it be accepted? (1) As already stated, the translation *wield for a spear* of the Hebrew verb *'ūr* is not warranted by the usage. (2) The rhythm of the English may gain by the omission, but the rhythm of the Hebrew suffers. (3) The reading of LXX. is supported by other ancient versions, while the Targum stands alone. No one acquainted with the character of the two versions would hesitate to prefer LXX.; but even the Targum reading proves that something was there. (4) That a certain passage *might* be explained as a gloss does not prove it to be such. (5) Objection (2) is removed if the reading of LXX. and other ancient versions is accepted. (6) The allusion to Greece may stand alone, but the one reference is all that is needed. (7) In order to make the series entirely symmetrical it would be necessary to introduce a name in the last line, for the comparison of one and the same person with a sword and a spear is peculiar. **The sword of a mighty man**—Effective and irresistible.

14. Jehovah himself will take a hand in the conflict. **Shall be seen**—Better, *manifests himself*. **Over them**—Over the sons of Zion; he comes from heaven and fights for them (Psa. xxiv, 8; Hab. iii, 11). The imagery of the description is borrowed from the thunderstorm (compare Psa. xviii, 7-15). **His arrow**—Compare verse 13. **As the lightning**—Lightning flashes are called the arrows of Jehovah (Psa. xviii, 14); here his arrow Ephraim (verse 13) is likened, in speed and destructiveness, to lightning. **Trumpet**—Better, *horn* (see on Hos. v, 8). Jehovah gives the signal to advance; then he himself rushes, at the head of his forces, against the enemy. **With whirlwinds of the south**—Instead of *with* we should perhaps read *like*, which involves the interchange of two similar letters, that are confused in other places in the Old Testament. The storms coming from the south, from across the broad desert, are peculiarly severe (compare Isa. xxi, 1; Job xxxvii, 9). Some have thought that there is here an allusion to the south (Sinai) as the original dwelling place of Jehovah, from which he was thought to proceed to assist his people (see on Hab. iii, 3; compare Judg. v, 4, 5).

Verse 15 contains a vivid description of the bloody conflict. The sons of Zion need have no fear, for Jehovah

of hosts shall defend them; and they shall devour, and [4]subdue with sling stones; and they shall drink, *and* make a noise as through wine; and they [5]shall be filled like bowls, *and* as [c]the corners of the altar. **16** And the LORD their God shall save them in that day as the flock of his people: for [d]*they shall be as* the stones of a crown, [e]lifted up as an

[4] Or, *subdue the stones of the sling.*—[5] Or, *shall fill both the bowls*, etc.

[c] Lev. 4. 18, 25; Deut. 12. 27.—[d] Isa. 62. 3; Mal. 3. 17.—[e] Isa. 11. 12

will be their shield. **Devour, . . . drink**—Like wild beasts they will fall upon their enemies to consume their flesh and drink their blood. A picture of utter destruction (compare Num. xxiii, 24). **Subdue with sling stones**—R. V., "tread down the sling stones." A. V. follows LXX. in taking *sling stones* as an instrumental accusative; they will subdue the enemies *by the use of sling stones*. However, the Revisers are probably correct in taking *sling stones* as the object. They may be regarded as representing all the missiles and weapons that are hurled by the enemies; these the sons of Zion will disregard entirely and trample under foot, and thus they will subdue the enemy and make a complete end of him (compare Job xli, 28). *Drink* is separated from *devour*, so as to bring it into close connection with the next clause, with which it is logically connected. **Make a noise as through wine**—They roar, as if they were intoxicated, in wild excitement over the wonderful triumph. The close connection of this clause with the preceding would be brought out more clearly if it were rendered as a circumstantial clause, "They shall drink, while making a noise as through wine." **And they shall be filled like bowls**—The bowls in which the blood of the sacrificial victims was caught (Exod. xxxviii, 3; Num. iv, 14). As these are filled with the blood of sacrificial animals, so the Jews will be filled with the blood of their enemies. **As the corners of the altar**—The reference is not to the putting of blood on the horns (Exod. xxix, 12), but to the sprinkling of blood against the altar (Lev. i, 5. 11). According to rabbinical tradition this was done in such a manner that the four sides were covered with two sprinklings. In order to do this the bowls containing the blood had to be swung against two opposite corners with considerable force; therefore the corners and the space on either side of them were covered most thickly. To be covered with blood is a symbol of triumph (Isa. lxiii, 1-3).

16. **Save**—Victory will come, because Jehovah will be the deliverer of his people. **In that day**—The day of battle described in verses 13-15. **As the flock of his people**—Better, *like a flock his people. His people* is the object of the verb to be supplied from the preceding; the thought of the whole being, "He will deliver his people as a shepherd delivers his flock from the ravages of wild beasts." **As the stones of a crown**—The Israelites will trample under foot the stones hurled by the enemies (verse 15), and the enemies themselves will suffer a similar fate, but Israel will be guarded and cared for tenderly, like a precious stone in the royal diadem (compare Hag. ii, 23). **Lifted up as an ensign**—R. V., "lifted on high." The meaning of the Hebrew verb *nāsas* is not quite certain; of the two meanings suggested the context favors the one in margin R. V., "glittering." Israel shall sparkle or glitter like a precious stone. A picture of the glory to which the Jews will be exalted. **His land**—The land of Jehovah. Some of the constructions in this verse are very peculiar. To remove these peculiarities various emendations, involving alterations, omissions, and additions, have been suggested. Nowack, for example, reads, "And Jehovah their God will save them in that day; like a flock he will pasture his people upon his land."

Verse 17 describes further the glories to be showered upon the restored na-

ensign upon his land. 17 For [f]how great *is* his goodness, and how great *is* his beauty! [g]corn shall make the young men [e]cheerful, and new wine the maids.

CHAPTER X.

ASK ye [a]of the LORD [b]rain [c]in the

[f] Psa. 31. 19.——[g] Joel 3. 18; Amos 9. 14. ——[e] Or, *grow*, or, *speak*.——[a] Jer. 14. 22.—— [b] Deut. 11. 14.——[c] Job 29. 23; Joel 2. 23.

time of the latter rain; *so* the LORD shall make [1]bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field. 2 For the [d] [2]idols have spoken vanity, and the diviners have seen a lie, and have told false dreams; they [e]com-

[1] Or, *lightnings*, Jer. 10. 13.——[d] Jer. 10. 8; Hab. 2. 18.——[2] Heb. *teraphims*, Judg. 17. 5.——[e] Job 13. 4.

tion. **His**—Not Jehovah's, but the people's. **Goodness**—Not moral goodness, but goodly appearance, equivalent to *prosperity* (so margin R. V.). **Beauty**—Expresses practically the same idea as the preceding. In the restoration the land will be pleasant to look upon. **Corn . . . wine**—Though the prophet has in mind general prosperity, he mentions specifically two of the chief products of Palestine (see on Joel i, 10); and though all the inhabitants will be benefited by the new prosperity, he singles out two classes who would show in the most marked manner the renewal of energy and vigor, the young men and the young women. Between these two he distributes rhetorically the two blessings specified. **New wine**—See on Joel i, 10. In making temporal prosperity a part of the Messianic promise this prophet agrees with many of his predecessors (see on Hos. ii, 21, 22; Amos ix, 13; Isa. iv, 2).

CHAPTER X.

JEHOVAH THE SOURCE OF PROSPERITY, 1, 2.

Chapter x is joined closely to ix, 17, by means of x, 1, 2. Chapter ix, 17, contains a promise of prosperity in the future, but, while anticipating the glories of the future, the prophet is anxious to transform the present; hence he exhorts his contemporaries to turn even now to Jehovah, the giver of every good and perfect gift.

R. V. gives a more satisfactory translation of verse 1: "Ask ye of Jehovah rain in the time of the latter rain, even of Jehovah that maketh lightnings; and he will give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field." **Time of the latter rain**—See on Joel ii, 23. These rains are specified because they are indispensable for the proper ripening of the crops. **That maketh lightnings** (R. V.)—Which are the harbingers of rain. Jehovah is described as the Lord of nature, therefore appeal should be made to him. **Showers of rain**—Literally, *rain of heavy rain;* that is, abundant rain (compare Job xxxvii, 6). As a result there will be for everyone **grass**—Better, in a more general sense, *vegetation*; the term includes all the products suitable for man's diet (Gen. i, 29). Rain is specified as a divine blessing, so as to connect the exhortation with ix, 17; but as there grain and wine represent prosperity in general, so here rain represents all blessings needed to bring about the prosperity.

2. The exhortation to appeal to Jehovah is supported by a reference to the inability of the idols to help those who put their trust in them (compare Hos. ii, 5ff.; Amos ii, 4). **Idols**—Better, R. V., "teraphim." See on Hos. iii, 4. **Have spoken vanity**—In promising rain and fertility which they could not give. **Diviners**—The men who claimed to be able, by the use of various illegitimate means, to determine the will of the deity. The mass of the people seemed to be unable to distinguish between the true prophet and the fraudulent diviner, and at times the latter appears to have been exceedingly popular (Isa. ii, 6; iii, 2). **Have seen a lie**—In the visions in which they claimed to have received the divine revelation. **False dreams**—Dreams were a second means of divine revelation (Num. xii, 6)

fort in vain: therefore they went their way as a flock, they [3]were troubled, [f]because *there was* no shepherd. 3 Mine anger was kindled against the shepherds, [g]and I [4]punished the goats: for the LORD of hosts [h]hath visited his flock the house of Judah, and [i]hath made

[3] Or, *answered that*, etc.—[f] Ezek. 34. 5.—[g] Ezek. 34. 17.

[4] Heb. *visited upon*.—[h] Luke 1. 68.—[i] Cant. 1. 9.

which was imitated by the diviners; they gave instructions which they claimed had come to them from God in dreams. **They comfort in vain**—Their words are powerless; they remain unfulfilled, and therefore do not help the people in their distress. That the prophet, when speaking of the helplessness of the idols, is thinking of past experiences of the nation is made plain by the rest of the verse, though R. V. uses present tenses. **Therefore**—Because the people appealed to teraphim and diviners rather than to Jehovah. **They**—The Israelites. **Went their way as a flock**—Literally, *pulled up their stakes*. The metaphor is taken from the pulling up of the stakes of a tent or sheepfold. The reference appears to be to the exile. The verb form indicates that the act itself took place in the past but that its effects continue to the present (G.-K., 106g.). **Were troubled**—R. V., "afflicted"; or, *oppressed;* by the hostile powers. The form of the verb is not the same as the preceding; it expresses continuity of action; they were oppressed continually. **Because there was no shepherd**—The last word is equivalent to *ruler* (see p. 603). There was no ruler strong enough to guard and care for the people (Num. xxvii, 17; Hos. x, 3, 15; xiii, 10, 11; compare Jer. xxiii, 4), or to ward off the calamity. The use of the term *shepherd* prepares the way for the next oracle.

RESTORATION OF THE JEWS AND OVERTHROW OF THE HOSTILE NATIONS, x, 3–xi, 3.

When the Jews came into the power of hostile nations (verse 2) they were governed by bad shepherds, that is, by cruel foreign rulers. But a change is about to take place; Jehovah will cut off the bad shepherds and deliver the oppressed flock (3). Judah and Ephraim will be transformed into mighty men (4-7), and Jehovah will bring them back from Assyria and Egypt to dwell in their own land (8-12), where they may rejoice over the wonderful deliverance, while the hostile powers wail and lament over their own complete undoing (xi, 1-3).

Rejuvenation of Judah and Ephraim, 3-7.

Jehovah has resolved to deliver the oppressed people; his anger will be kindled against the oppressors. The exiles will be made strong, so that they can trample their enemies under foot; then they will be restored to their own land, because Jehovah will have mercy upon them.

In verses 3, 4 the prophet looks into the future, therefore the tenses of R. V. are to be preferred. **The shepherds**—Now ruling over the Jews, the representatives of the foreign nations. **Goats** ["he-goats"]—Who lead the herds—bell-wethers; practically synonymous with "shepherds." There is no reason for supposing that the prophet means to make a distinction between the monarchs (shepherds) and the nobles or officials (he-goats). Against the oppressors the anger of Jehovah is kindled. **Hath visited**—A perfect of prophetic certainty; Jehovah has already decided upon the act, and he will surely carry out his purpose. The verb is used here in a favorable sense (compare Jer. xxiii, 2), visit with blessing. **Flock**—The picture of the shepherd and the sheep is continued. **House of Judah**—In apposition to *his flock*. Ephraim is not to be excluded (verses 6, 7), but Judah forms the nucleus, to which

them as his goodly horse in the battle. 4 Out of him came forth [k]the corner, out of him [l]the nail, out of him the battle bow, out of him every oppressor together.

5 And they shall be as mighty *men*, which [m]tread down *their enemies* in the mire of the streets in the battle: and they shall fight, because the LORD *is* with them, and [5]the riders on horses shall be confounded. 6 And I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph, and [n]I will bring them again to place them; for I [o]have mercy upon them: and they shall

[k] Num. 24. 17; 1 Sam. 14. 38; Isa. 19. 13.—[l] Isa. 22. 23.—[m] Psa. 18. 42.

[5] Or, *they shall make the riders on horses ashamed.*—[n] Jer. 3. 18; Ezek. 37. 21.—[o] Hos. 1. 7.

Ephraim will be joined. **As his goodly horse**—Literally, *horse of splendor;* a splendid war horse. Not only will the oppressors be cut off, but Israel will be transformed from an oppressed and trembling flock into a strong and victorious host, resembling in courage and swiftness a spirited war horse.

4. Henceforth the nation will be governed by native rulers. **Out of him**—Does the pronoun refer to Judah or to Jehovah? On this point commentators are not agreed; the former is the more probable, the thought being that in the future the rulers called *corner, nail,* etc., will come forth not from the foreign nations but from Judah. **Corner**—R. V., "corner stone." The term is applied to the Messiah in Isa. xxviii, 16, but here it is equivalent to leader (Isa. xix, 13; 1 Sam. xiv, 38). The leader stands out prominently like the corner. **Nail**—The origin of the metaphor is not quite clear. It may, perhaps, be traced to the pin with which the tent is fastened down (Judg. iv, 21, 22), or to the peg on which articles and vessels are hung on the wall. Here it represents those in the community on whose counsel and support others depend, the leaders (Isa. xxii, 23). **Battle bow**—Military leaders, or, perhaps, warriors in general. **Every oppressor**—R. V., "every ruler"; margin, "exactor." The same word is translated in Exod. iii, 7; v, 10, etc., "taskmaster"; here it appears to be used in the general sense *ruler* (compare Isa. iii, 12; xiv, 2; lx, 17), though the idea may be implied that these rulers will oppress the enemies who now oppress the Jews. **Together**—The force of this word is not certain; it cannot be taken with the verb, "shall go forth together," since the two are separated in Hebrew; taken with "every ruler" it would seem to indicate that the prophet expects more than one ruler to come forth. Some commentators take it with the next verse (see below).

Verse 5 seems to be an expansion of 3b. **Mighty men**—Heroes, courageous warriors. **Tread down**—See on ix, 15, where, however, a different verb is used. **In the mire**—Perhaps better, with a slight alteration, *as the mire* (compare Mic. vii, 10). They will fight so bravely because Jehovah will be with them. **The riders on horses**—Of the hostile army. The present Hebrew text of verse 5 is awkward, and most recent commentators suggest one or more alterations, all of them very simple. Marti would read 5a, "together shall they tread down in battle the mighty men as dirt in the streets."

Verse 6 contains a promise that Ephraim will share in the blessings. **I will strengthen**—The verb is a derivative of the noun *mighty men* (verse 5), equivalent to *I will make heroes.* **Joseph**—Ephraim (verse 7; ix, 13), Israel, the northern kingdom. **I will save**—From oppression; this deliverance will be the first blessing. **I will bring them again to place them**—R. V., "I will bring them back"; from exile. The form of the verb is peculiar, but the translation of R. V. fits better into the context. The deliverance is wrought, not because they deserve it, but because Jehovah has decided to have mercy on them once

be as though I had not cast them off: for I *am* the LORD their God, and [p]will hear them. 7 And *they of* Ephraim shall be like a mighty *man*, and their [q]heart shall rejoice as through wine: yea, their children shall see *it*, and be glad; their heart shall rejoice in the LORD. 8 I will [r]hiss for them, and gather them; for I have redeemed them: [s]and they shall increase as they have increased. 9 And [t]I will sow them among the people; and they shall [u]remember me in far countries; and they shall live with their children, and turn again. 10 [x]I will bring them again also out of the land of Egypt, and gather them out of Assyria; and I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon; and [y]*place*

[p] Chap. 13. 9.——[q] Psa. 104. 15; chap. 9.15.——[r] Isa. 5. 26.——[s] Isa. 49. 19; Ezek. 36. 37.

[t] Hos. 2. 23.——[u] Deut. 30. 1.——[x] Isa. 11. 11, 16; Hos. 11. 11.——[y] Isa. 49. 20.

more. **As though I had not cast them off**—The exile seemed to prove that Jehovah had cast them off, but in the glorious future all traces of the divine disfavor will disappear. In spite of their sins Jehovah is still their God, and when in distress they cry unto him he will hear them. For "I will hear them" G. A. Smith translates, "I will hold converse with them."

7. Ephraim, like Judah, is transformed into a nation of heroes, and realizing that once more the divine favor is theirs they will rejoice greatly. **As through wine**—They will be beside themselves for joy (compare ix, 15). The magnitude of rejoicing is indicated in the rest of the verse. It will become contagious; all will join in it, and all will give the glory to Jehovah who has wrought the wonderful salvation. **Their children**—Not young boys and girls, but the individual Ephraimites; compare "sons (the same word in Hebrew) of Zion" (ix, 13).

Restoration of the exiles from Assyria and Egypt, 8-12.

These verses describe more minutely the deliverance of Ephraim. 8. **I will hiss**—Give the signal to return (compare Isa. v, 26; vii, 18). **Have redeemed**—The redemption is already decreed, though its execution is still future. **As they have increased**—As they were great in numbers before the calamity fell upon them, so they will be again. 9. **I will sow**—An obscure and much-discussed expression. The marginal reading, "though I sow," is to be preferred; but even that leaves it an open question whether the sowing is already passed or still in the future, nor does it indicate the exact force of *sow*. The meaning *scatter* seems most suitable, though Hebrew usage may not support it. The Hebrew, if interpreted naturally, places the sowing in the future; a change of one vowel point would throw it in the past, and to the past it seems to refer—"Though I scattered them among the peoples," that is, during the exile. The succeeding clause is the apodosis. **They shall remember me**—With the above suggested translation of the first clause, the verb here should not be rendered as a simple future but as a past tense expressing the idea of continuation (G.-K., 107d)—"though I scattered them, yet they continued to remember me." **Far countries**—The lands of exile, here Egypt and Assyria (verse 10). **Shall live with their children**—With this clause begins the promise. Those who are now in exile shall not perish, but they and their children shall live (Hos. vi, 2; Ezek. xxxvii, 1ff.) and return to their old home. LXX. reads, "bring up their children"; which is probably meant to express a similar idea. 10. They will raise families, which are considered a gift from God (Psa. cxxvii, 3-5), and with them they will return home.

Verse 10 takes up the promise of restoration from verse 8. **Egypt, . . . Assyria**—The two long-time enemies of the people of Israel (see on Hos. viii, 13; ix, 3; compare Isa. xi, 11, 12). On the use of these names here and their bearing on the date of the prophecy see Introduction, p. 584. **Gilead**

shall not be found for them. 11 [z]And he shall pass through the sea with affliction, and shall smite the waves in the sea, and all the deeps of the river shall dry up: and [a]the pride of Assyria shall be brought down, and [b]the scepter of Egypt shall depart away. 12 And I will strengthen them in the LORD; and [c]they shall walk up and down in his name, saith the LORD.

[z] Isa. 11. 15, 16.—[a] Isa. 14. 25.

[b] Ezek. 30. 13.—[c] Mic. 4. 5.

. . . **Lebanon**—The former is the territory east of the Jordan (see on Amos i, 3), the latter is the mountain range in the north of the territory west of the Jordan (compare Hos. xiv, 4-8). Gilead was rich in pasture land, Lebanon in forests; hence the two districts might be named as types of extreme fertility. If so, the thought would be that the restored exiles will be settled in the most fertile regions of Palestine. Or the two districts might represent all the territory east and west of the Jordan respectively; then the promise would be that the restored exiles will occupy all the ancient territory of Israel; and even then the land will not be able to hold them (Isa. xlix, 19, 20).

Verse 11 elaborates upon the promise of 10a. The prophet describes the future deliverance in language which is strongly colored by the memory of the exodus. The details of interpretation are uncertain. **He**—LXX., "they"; the exiles. The pronoun in Hebrew refers to Jehovah, which is, perhaps, to be preferred (see below). **Shall pass through the sea with affliction**—He will bring affliction upon the sea (the Red Sea), so that it will dry up and let the exiles pass through. R. V., "he will pass through the sea of affliction"; literally, *the sea, affliction* (in apposition), which expresses a similar thought, namely, the sea which caused affliction, that is, at the time of the exodus—the Red Sea. The expression is peculiar. Von Orelli, following some of the ancient versions, takes *affliction* as the subject and renders "affliction shall pass over the sea," which expresses a thought similar to that of A. V. Some take *affliction* in a physical sense—narrowness—and read "the sea of narrowness"—the narrow sea, the Red Sea. If the present Hebrew text is correct, R. V. is to be preferred. Jehovah will pass through the sea to smite it, so that the exiles may be able to cross dry-shod (compare Isa. xi, 15). Various emendations have been suggested. Marti, for example, reads 11a, "and they shall pass through the Sea of Egypt, and dry up shall all the depths of the Nile." **The waves in the sea**—Another very peculiar construction. **The deeps of the river shall dry up**—R. V. rightly understands "river" of the Nile (see on Amos viii, 8, where the same word is used). The Nile will dry up to permit the exiles to return. Passages like Isa. xi, 15, and even the context here might lead one to understand *river* of the Euphrates, though the word *river* used in the Isaiah passage and elsewhere is not the one used here. The Red Sea will dry up to let the exiles return from Egypt, the Euphrates to let them return from Assyria. **Pride**—The blow which will fall upon the nation will result in its utter humiliation. **Scepter**—The symbol of power. The taking away of the scepter symbolizes the withdrawal of power and authority; Egypt also will be humbled. 12. **Strengthen them in Jehovah**—Jehovah himself will be the strength, that is, the source of the strength, of the exiles. With Jehovah on their side they need not fear. **Walk . . . in his name**—See on Mic. iv, 5. *Up and down* would better be omitted; it is a useless and confusing addition by the English translators. Practically all the Hebrew prophets expect the restoration of the scattered Jews; hence from this promise the date of this utterance cannot be determined.

CHAPTER XI

OPEN [a]thy doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour thy cedars. 2 Howl, fir tree; for the cedar is fallen; because the [1]mighty are spoiled: howl, O ye oaks of Bashan; [b]for [2]the forest of the vintage is come down.

3 *There is* a voice of the howling of the shepherds; for their glory is spoiled: a voice of the roaring of young lions; for the pride of Jordan

[a] Chap. 10. 10.—[1] Or, *gallants.*—[b] Isa. 32. 19.—[2] Or, *the defensed forest.*

CHAPTER XI.

Lamentation of the Humiliated Enemies, 1-3.

These verses do not form an independent piece, nor are they to be connected with xi, 4ff., for the opening words of verse 4 show that there a new prophecy begins. They are rather the conclusion to the promise in chapter x, that the exiles will be reestablished in their own land (x, 10), for they state what will become of the present occupants of the land: they will be completely annihilated. What has been said indicates that the judgment announced in these verses is not, as is commonly assumed, a judgment upon Israel, but upon the foreigners who now occupy their territory. The language used is highly poetic (compare Isa. ii, 12ff.).

1. The enemies are pictured as magnificent forests (Isa. x, 33, 34), in danger of being devoured by fire. The prophet calls upon Lebanon to open its doors so that the fire may come in. **Lebanon**—See on x, 10, and reference there. **Cedars**—These were the glory of Lebanon. At one time they were very abundant. Solomon used them in the temple (1 Kings v, 6), and several of the Assyrian kings claim to have cut them and carried them to Assyria (compare Hab. ii, 17; see Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible*, article "Cedar"). 2. **Howl, fir tree**—Or, *cypress.* Next to the cedar the choicest tree of Lebanon (Isa. xiv, 8; xxxvii, 24); it also was used in the construction of the temple (1 Kings v, 22, 24). **For the cedar is fallen**—Not so much out of sympathy as because a similar fate is awaiting the cypress. **The mighty are spoiled**—R. V., "the goodly ones." Expresses the same thought as the preceding. The mighty ones are the noble trees of Lebanon. **Oaks of Bashan**—See on Amos iv, 1. Bashan was at one time exceedingly rich in oak forests; even now fine specimens of oak trees may be seen east of the Jordan, but not in as great numbers as formerly (compare Tristram, *Natural History*, p. 369). **Forest of the vintage**—Better, R. V., "strong forest"; or, better, with margin, "fortified"—inaccessible. Both Bashan and Lebanon must fall before the anger of Jehovah. The two forests with their majestic trees represent the heathen power that is now occupying the former territory of Israel west and east of the Jordan (see on x, 10). To make room for the exiles about to return it must be driven out. To simplify the Hebrew text, which is somewhat awkward, Marti proposes to omit 2a; he reads verses 1, 2, "Open, O Lebanon, thy doors, that the fire may devour thy cedars; howl, ye oaks of Bashan, for the strong forest is come down."

3. The prophet already hears the lament of those who have been robbed of their power and glory. **A voice of the howling**—Equivalent to *loud howling.* A more forceful rendering would be, "Hark! howling!" (Compare G.-K., 146b; Zeph. i, 14.) **Shepherds**—As in x, 3, the foreign rulers. The presence of extensive herds in Bashan may have suggested the use of the term. **Their glory**—The rich pasture of the shepherds; in the figure, the majesty and splendor of the rulers. **Young lions**—At one time lions seem to have been abundant in Palestine (see on Hos. v, 14); here they represent the rulers and nobles. **The pride of Jordan**—"The thickets and reeds which grew so luxuriantly on the

is spoiled. 4 Thus saith the LORD my God; [c]Feed the flock of the slaughter; 5 Whose possessors slay them, and [d]hold themselves not

[c] Verse 7.—[d] Jer. 2. 3; 50. 7.

guilty: and they that sell them [e]say, Blessed *be* the LORD; for I am rich: and their own shepherds pity them not. 6 For I will no more pity the

[e] Deut. 29. 19; Hos. 12. 8.

banks of the Jordan, and afforded so safe and convenient a lair for the lions" (Jer. xlix, 19). In the figure, identical in meaning with *glory*, the wealth and splendor of the rulers.

ALLEGORY OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD, 4-14.

The interpretation of these verses is a very difficult task, chiefly because it is not possible to determine the historical situation reflected in them (for Marti's view and other theories see Introduction, p. 589). Two things seem to be certain: 1. There is no immediate connection between this section and x, 3–xi, 3. 2. The verses are descriptive rather than predictive. The preceding section looks into the future, this into the past, most probably the immediate past, so that the author may have been one of the actors in the events described. In the form of an allegory he describes Jehovah's loving care for the people, their ingratitude, his resentment, and the resulting judgment. He declares that their experiences, pleasant and unpleasant, were ordained by Jehovah for a special purpose. When they disregarded his pleasant leadings he gave them up, temporarily at least, to calamity and misfortune. In the section immediately following the prophet turns again to the future with the promise that Jehovah will once more have mercy upon them. The close connection between the human agent and the divine Master is indicated in the use of the first person by the former, even when the act described must be regarded as having been executed by Jehovah himself. Whether the symbolical acts described were, either all or in part, actually performed by the prophet, or whether he introduces them only for the purpose of making the description more vivid, cannot be determined and is of secondary importance. The act symbolized is the real thing, and it remains the same whatever one may think of the reality of the symbolical acts (see p. 603f).

The shepherd's loving care, 4-6.

4. The author represents Jehovah as appointing him the shepherd of the flock of slaughter, which Jehovah has determined to deliver from its oppressors. **Feed**—Give shepherding care and protection (see on Mic. v, 4). **The flock**—The community of the Jews (see on Mic. vii, 14). **Of the slaughter**—Not a flock already slaughtered, nor a flock that is to be slaughtered literally (compare Jer. xii, 3), but a flock that is treated cruelly and shamefully in the manner described in verse 5, which undoubtedly led to the undoing of many. **Whose possessors**—Margin R. V., "buyers." The former is the meaning of the word in Isa. i, 3, but the parallelism favors the marginal reading (compare Amos viii, 6). **Hold themselves not guilty**—Literally, *are not guilty;* meant ironically, in their own opinion; hence the English reproduces the thought correctly (compare Jer. l, 7; Hos. v, 15). The buyers, in spite of their cruelty, admit no wrongdoing. **They that sell them**—The Jews are represented as cattle or sheep that may be bought or sold at the pleasure of the owner. The sellers succeed in filling their own pockets. **Blessed be Jehovah**—Not only do they not recognize guilt; they even exclaim piously that they are prospered by Jehovah; hence their acts must be in accord with his will. **Their own shepherds**—This is a translation *plus* an interpretation; literally, *their shepherds*. The form of the pronoun indicates that *their* does not refer to the flock, but to the buyers and sellers. These two are under the direction of the shepherds. **Pity them**

inhabitants of the land, saith the LORD: but, lo, I will [3]deliver the men every one into his neighbor's hand, and into the hand of his king: and they shall smite the land, and out of their hand I will not deliver *them*. 7 And I will [f]feed the flock of slaughter, [4]*even* you, [g]O poor of the flock. And I took unto me two staves; the one I called Beauty, and

[3] Heb. *make to be found.*—[f] Verse 4. —[4] Or. *verily the poor.*

[g] Zeph. 3. 12; Matt. 11. 5.

not—The form of the pronoun is the same as in *their* buyers, *their* sellers; hence it must refer to the flock. Opinions differ as to who are the persons meant by *buyers, sellers, shepherds.* In all probability the first two are practically identical; they are persons who ill-treat the flock; the distinction is introduced only to make complete the picture of the helplessness of the sheep; they can be bought or sold at the pleasure of their owners and can do nothing to prevent it. Some think that they represent foreign rulers, but the exclamation "Blessed be *Jehovah*" contradicts this view. It seems best to understand all three terms of native rulers, the buyers and sellers as unscrupulous nobles or officials who oppress the people to serve their own interests, the shepherds as the masters or rulers of these nobles, who should have compassion for their subjects, but were indifferent and allowed their underlings to do as they pleased.

Verse 6 is another exceedingly difficult verse. Its connection with the preceding verse is not clear, and verse 7 would form a more suitable continuation of verse 5. Most recent commentators omit it as a later gloss. If it is original, it is best interpreted as a parenthetical sentence introduced by the author to explain the appointment of the shepherd. Jehovah was about to execute judgment upon the whole earth, and during the crisis he desired to have his people in the care of a capable leader. **Inhabitants of the land**—Better, *of the earth;* for *the men,* which follows, is used ordinarily of all mankind; Jehovah intended to shake the nations (Hag. ii, 6, 7). **The men**—Better, *mankind,* or, *the human race;* with special reference, perhaps, to the surrounding nations that have proved hostile to the Jews. **Deliver . . . every one into his neighbor's hand, and into the hand of his king**—The threat is one of anarchy and civil strife among the nations of the earth and of oppression by tyrannical kings. It is not improbable, however, that we should read, with a change of a single vowel point, "into the hand of his shepherd" instead of "into his neighbor's hand"; the whole clause, "into the hand of his shepherd and into the hand of his king." Then the thought will be, while the Jews are to have a good shepherd, the nations of the earth are to be placed under the rule of tyrannical shepherds (rulers) and kings. **They**—The tyrannical rulers and kings. **I will not deliver**—Jehovah will allow the nations of the earth to be destroyed. No further reference is made to the fate of the nations, and in the succeeding verses the author returns to the shepherd appointed over the Jews.

The people's lack of appreciation, 7, 8.

The newly appointed shepherd enters upon his tasks with great expectation, but, alas! he is sorely disappointed. 7. **Even you, O poor of the flock**—R. V., "verily the poor of the flock"; margin, "the most miserable of sheep." The word translated *even you* or *verily* means ordinarily *therefore,* which gives no sense here. LXX. combines it with the next word into one and reads, "for the Canaanites of the flock"=for the traffickers of the flock (see on Hos. xii, 7), which would be a reference to the buyers and sellers of verse 5. The divinely appointed shepherd enters upon his tasks with the determination to displace these buyers and sellers who have cruelly abused the flock. LXX. is probably to be preferred. The means with which the shepherd in-

the other I called [5]Bands; and I fed the flock. 8 Three shepherds also I cut off [h]in one month; and my soul [6]loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me. 9 Then said I, I will not feed you: [i]that that dieth, let it die; and that that is to be cut off, let it be cut off; and let the rest eat every one the flesh [7]of another.

[5] Or, *Binders.*—[h] Hos. 5. 7.—[6] Heb. *was straitened for them.*

[i] Jer. 15. 2; 43. 11.—[7] Heb. *of his fellow,* or, *neighbor.*

tended to accomplish his ends are indicated by the two staves which are selected. **Beauty**—Margin R. V., "Graciousness." The staff symbolizes the return of the divine favor to the people. The shepherd meant to emphasize constantly the truth that, in spite of the present suffering, Jehovah is gracious to his people and is ready to shower upon them his blessing, if they will let him. **Bands**—Or, *union.* Verse 14 places it beyond doubt that the prophet is thinking of the reunion between the north and south. The promise of such reunion would be an earnest of strength and victory. Evidently he considers the two staves sufficient to put new life and courage into the ill-treated flock. **I fed**—See on verse 4, and reference there.

8. In the carrying out of his commission the shepherd met opposition, but he overcame it. **Three shepherds . . . I cut off**—R. V., "the three shepherds." Who are these shepherds? Are they foreigners or native rulers? If native rulers, who are they? The shepherds of x, 3, are foreign oppressors, but the shepherds of xi, 5, are native rulers; since the latter is in the more immediate context it seems best to take the three shepherds of this verse to be native rulers. The defenders of the preëxilic date see here a reference to the assassination of the successors of Jeroboam II, Zechariah, Shallum, and a "third pretender" (2 Kings xv, 13-15). On the other hand, those who favor a late postexilic date think of the frequent changes in the high-priestly office during the years immediately preceding the Maccabean uprising. Marti thinks of Lysimachus, who was killed by a mob about 171 B. C. (2 Macc. iv, 22); Jason, who was driven from the office in 170 and found an ignominious end in exile (2 Macc. v, 10); and Menelaus, who became high priest again in 170 and lost his office in 168, when the Jehovah cult was temporarily discontinued in the temple, and who died a violent death in Berœa in Syria in 163 (2 Macc. xiii, 3-8). Reference has been made to the difficulty involved in assigning the prophecy to so late a date (p. 589); certainty seems impossible. **In one month**—Not to be understood literally. It is equivalent to *in a short space of time.* At any rate, we know of no crisis in Jewish history when three rulers, either foreign or native, either kings or high-priests, were cut off during one month.

8b might be interpreted as supplying the reason why the good shepherd cut off the three shepherds. If so, the transition from verse 8 to verse 9 would be very abrupt; hence it seems better to make a full stop after "in one month" and connect 8b with verse 9. With great zeal the shepherd entered upon his task, but the flock failed to appreciate his efforts. **And**—R. V., "for"; better, *but.* **My soul loathed them**—R. V., "was weary of them." The shepherd grew weary of the unappreciative flock; to it refers the pronoun *them* and not to the shepherds. **Their soul also abhorred me**—R. V., "loathed." The flock came to dislike the shepherd's strict control.

Withdrawal of the good shepherd, 9–14.

9, 10. As a result of the flock's ingratitude the shepherd decided to discontinue the shepherding care. It is difficult to differentiate in these verses between the voice of the shepherd and that of Jehovah; sometimes Jehovah, sometimes the shep-

10 And I took my staff, *even* Beauty, and cut it asunder, that I might break my covenant which I had made with all the people. **11** And it was broken in that day: and [8]so [k]the poor of the flock that waited upon me knew that it *was* the word of the LORD. **12** And I said unto them, [9]If ye think good, give *me* my price; and if not, forbear. So they [l]weighed for my price thirty *pieces* of silver. **13** And the LORD said

[8] Or, *the poor of the flock*, etc., *certainly knew*.——[k] Verse 7; Zeph. 3. 12.

[9] Heb. *If* it be *good in your eyes*.——[l] Matt. 26. 15; see Exod. 21. 32.

herd, seems to be the speaker. Only the former could authorize the sentence of doom implied in verse 9 or break the covenant (verse 10). The shepherd will leave the flock to its hopeless fate, to die, or to be cut off by the oppressors mentioned in verse 5, or to be devoured by one another. 10. As an indication of his determination he breaks his staff. **Beauty**—See on verse 7. The breaking of this staff symbolized the withdrawal of the divine favor. **Break my covenant . . . made with all the people**—Better, R. V., "with all the peoples"; the nations surrounding the Jewish community. While the divine favor endured it prevented the hostile nations from doing injury to the flock (Hos. ii, 18). Since Jehovah's will would be supreme in this matter, his resolve amounted practically to a covenant with these peoples, binding them to refrain from hurting the flock of Jehovah; with the covenant broken they would be at liberty to do as they pleased.

The staff was broken and the covenant dissolved, and verse 11 implies that the results became apparent at once. **And so the poor of the flock**—As in verse 7; better, *the traffickers of the flock* (compare verse 5). **That waited upon me**—R. V., "that gave heed unto me." Not *that were obedient to me*, but in a general sense *that observed me*; that is, that took notice of the acts of the shepherd. The words do not imply that they were influenced for the better. The events which immediately followed the breaking of the staff were evidence that the shepherd was indeed the representative of Jehovah.

12. This recognition on the part of the traffickers would seem to offer an opportunity for further tests, (1) whether they had been led to a better appreciation of his services, (2) whether there was any desire on their part to have his services continued. One staff was still whole, an indication that he had not finally forsaken them. **Unto them**—If the emendation suggested in verse 11 is correct, this can refer only to the traffickers; it is only natural that they should pay the wages, since they had derived the most benefit from the flock (verse 5). The shepherd makes no demands; he asks them to decide whether or not his services merit compensation, and, if so, how much. They reply by offering him wages. **Thirty pieces of silver**—A piece or shekel of silver is equivalent to about 60 cents; thirty pieces to about $18. This seems to have been the price of a slave (Exod. xxi, 32), and the offer showed how little they appreciated the services of a divinely appointed shepherd (compare Matt. xxvi, 15).

The offer was an insult to the shepherd as well as to Jehovah, and verse 13 describes the displeasure of the latter. He orders the shepherd to throw the money away. **Cast it unto the potter**—A much-discussed phrase. Limited space makes impossible the enumeration of all the different interpretations given. On the assumption that the present Hebrew text is correct, the fewest difficulties are offered by the interpretation of Keil, who suggests that *cast it to the potter* may be a "proverbial expression for contemptuous treatment," though, as he says, "we have no means of tracing the origin of the phrase satisfactorily." Exception has been taken to the present text on the ground that there was no potter in the temple (compare

unto me, Cast it unto the [m]potter: a goodly price that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty *pieces* of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the LORD. 14 Then I cut asunder mine other staff, *even* [10]Bands, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.

[m] Matt. 27. 9, 10.

[10] Or, *Binders.*

last clause of verse 13), but if the phrase is a proverbial saying it is not necessary to assume the presence of a potter in the temple, be it for the purpose of repairing or selling dishes or for the purpose of worship, for the money might be treated contemptuously without a potter being present. The addition "in the house of Jehovah" calls attention to the seriousness and solemnity of the transaction. The action was symbolical as much as the breaking of the staff (verses 10, 14); for it signified the cessation of the care of the shepherd and of Jehovah. Jehovah and the people were the persons chiefly interested in this; the temple was the dwelling place of Jehovah, and to it flocked the people; hence all transactions requiring the presence of both parties could best be performed there. Such was the act performed by the shepherd, and it is for this reason that he selected the house of Jehovah as the place where he would give expression to Jehovah's displeasure. With this interpretation the nature of the "contemptuous treatment" remains undefined; the shepherd may have cast the money away, or may have trampled upon it, or may have done anything else that would indicate how lightly he and Jehovah valued the sum. Many recent scholars prefer the reading of Targum and Peshitto," "to the treasurer" or "treasury" in the place of "to the potter." This would remove the obscurity of the present expression, but the objection raised by Keil is not without weight: "God could not possibly say to the prophet, The wages paid for my service are indeed a miserable amount, yet put it in the temple treasury, for it is at any rate better than nothing." **Goodly price**—Meant ironically. **I was prized at**—Jehovah identifies himself here with the shepherd; the insult offered to the latter was in reality an insult to Jehovah.

14. In consequence of the lack of appreciation on the part of the flock the shepherd decides to abandon it entirely; as a sign of this he breaks the second staff, for which he has no further use. **Bands**—See on verse 7. **That I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel**—This does not imply the existence of the two kingdoms, nor does it point to a period before the division; it refers rather to the future reunion of the north and south, which is expected by many prophets to take place in the Messianic age. The breaking of the staff implies the destruction of the prospects of such reunion, but with these prospects gone there will be dashed to pieces any hope of a final triumph over the enemies, which will lead to the exaltation and glorification of the victors. On the teaching of the allegory see Introduction, p. 603. If the prophecy comes from the Maccabean period (see on verse 8), the good shepherd represents a high priest who occupied the office about 170 B. C. Who he was cannot be determined; Marti thinks of Onias IV.

Allegory of the Foolish Shepherd, xi, 15-17 (+ xiii, 7-9.)

This allegory is the sequel of the allegory of the good shepherd; xi, 15, 16, continues the record of the people's experiences down to the present, verse 17 turns to the future. The flock that rejected the good shepherd was not left to itself—it was given into the hands of a foolish shepherd, who worked havoc with it; but he is doomed, and the flock will be delivered (xiii, 7-9). By the allegory the prophet teaches that the present miserable condition of the

15 And the LORD said unto me, [n]Take unto thee yet the instruments of a foolish shepherd. 16 For, lo, I will raise up a shepherd in the land, *which* shall not visit those that be [11]cut off, neither shall seek the young one, nor heal that that is broken, nor [12]feed that that standeth still: but he shall eat the flesh of the fat, and tear their claws in

[n] Ezek. 34. 2-4.——[11] Or, *hidden.*

[12] Or, *bear.*

people is due to their own stubbornness, and at the same time he assures them that Jehovah will return in mercy and compassion at some future time.

15. **Jehovah said unto me**—As on the former occasion (verse 4). **Yet**—R. V., "yet again." Connects this command with the preceding one. **Take . . . the instruments of a . . . shepherd**—The staves (verse 7). The taking up of these shows that the shepherd is ready to begin the shepherding care of the flock; hence the command is practically equivalent to that in verse 4. **Foolish**—This time the prophet is to act the part of a foolish shepherd (verses 7, 8). *Foolish* is to be understood in a moral sense, as ordinarily in the Old Testament, equivalent to *forgetful of duty, worthless* (verse 17). While this shepherd also would have staves, they could not be the same as those of the good shepherd (see on verse 7).

Verse 16 does not point to the future from the standpoint of the prophet, but from that of Jehovah's command. It states why the latter issued the command, and at the same time it supplies an interpretation of the symbolic action. Jehovah, who withdrew the good shepherd (verse 13), determined to raise up one who would not protect and guard but hurt and destroy. **A shepherd in the land**—Not a successor of the "three shepherds" (verse 8), but of the good shepherd. Who is meant cannot be determined definitely. If Marti's view concerning the three shepherds (see on verse 8) and concerning the good shepherd (see at the close of comments on verse 14) is correct it is not impossible that the foolish shepherd is Alcimus, who became high priest in 163 (compare 1 Macc. vii, 5-25; ix, 54-57). **Visit**—In a good sense, *to take an interest in.* **Those that be cut off**—As in verse 9 (compare verse 5); he will leave them to their fate. Margin R. V., "lost"; but, since the lost ones are referred to in the next clause, the ordinary rendering is to be preferred. **The young one**—Better, R. V., "those that are scattered." If the text is correct, which may be doubted (see Ezek. xxxiv, 4), the translation of R. V. is to be preferred; at least it expresses the thought which one would expect. The foolish shepherd would not seek the lost, nor would he heal the injured, nor feed the sound. **That that standeth still**—R. V., "that which is sound." Another obscure expression, of which A. V. gives the more literal translation. *Standeth* is generally interpreted as the opposite of *broken* in the preceding clause; he does not look after the needs of the injured nor after those of the sound and strong. The translation *feed* also is uncertain; margin R. V. suggests "bear," and the whole clause has been translated, "he does not bear the halting one," that is, he does not lift up and carry in his arms the lamb or sheep that halts or comes to a standstill because of weariness (compare John x, 1-16). Though there may be uncertainty as to details, the thought expressed in all the clauses is that the foolish shepherd would not have the least care for the welfare of the flock (compare Ezek. xxxiv, 4).

But not only would he neglect the flock, he would even help to destroy it. **He shall eat the flesh of the fat**—That is, of the fatlings of the flock. Instead of looking after the welfare of the flock he is concerned only with his own well-being, and to satisfy his own appetite he is ready to sacrifice the lives of the sheep (compare Isa. iii, 13-15). **Tear their claws in pieces**

pieces. **17** °Woe to the idol shepherd that leaveth the flock! the sword *shall be* upon his arm, and upon his right eye: his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened.

° Jer. 23. 1; Ezek. 34. 2; John 10. 12, 13.

—R. V., "hoofs." This obscure phrase has received various interpretations. Some have thought that the reference is to the cruel practice of driving the flocks over rough roads; some have interpreted it of the intense greed of the shepherd which manifests itself in the tearing to pieces of the hoofs, so as to secure the last morsel of flesh or fat. Others have thought of the tearing of the hoofs, that the sheep might not wander too far, and thus give the shepherd trouble. The second interpretation is improbable, because one as greedy as this shepherd would hardly stop to gnaw the bones clean; he would rather kill another beast. The other interpretations are possible; in either case we would have a picture of extreme cruelty. The expression is peculiar and the text may have suffered; if so, we have no means of determining the original.

17. The present hopeless condition is not to continue forever; Jehovah has sent it as a judgment for the rejection of the good shepherd, but he will again have mercy; the foolish shepherd will be removed. **Woe to the idol shepherd**—Better, R. V., "worthless shepherd." He is doomed. **That leaveth the flock**—To destruction (compare John x, 12). The succeeding words should be translated as an imprecatory clause, "A sword upon his arm and upon his right eye!" May the arm which should have guarded and protected the flock be cut off, and may the eyes which should have selected good pasture and should have watched against danger be destroyed. That this will happen is affirmed in the rest of the verse. The arm will wither and the eye will lose its sight. The forms of judgment prayed for and threatened in the two clauses do not seem to harmonize. If a sword were used against the arm the result would hardly be a withering of the same. In view of this fact some commentators read, with a slight change in the vocalization of a single consonant, *drought*—drying up, withering—instead of *sword*. This change, "drought upon his arm and upon his right eye," would bring the two clauses into perfect accord. On the other hand, it has been suggested that the two different kinds of punishment are placed together so as to emphasize the "greatness and terrible nature of the judgment." If xiii, 7-9, is the original continuation of xi, 17 (see introductory remarks on xiii, 7-9), the present reading, "sword," is to be retained (compare xiii, 7).

CHAPTER XII.

Various Utterances Concerning the Future of Israel, xii, 1–xiv, 21.

The heading (xii, 1) names the subject of these utterances, Israel, a term used here not in a national but in a religious sense of the people of Jehovah. The prophecies center around Jerusalem and Judah, the home of the postexilic Jewish community. The section falls naturally into two parts, xii, 1–xiii, 6, and xiv, 1-21; xiii, 7-9, has no close connection either with xiii, 1-6, or with chapter xiv (see on xiii, 7-9). The first part, xii, 1–xiii, 6, consists of three divisions; the first (xii, 1-9) deals with some marvelous deliverance of Judah and Jerusalem, the second (xii, 10-14) with a prolonged penitential mourning over some great crime, the third (xiii, 1-6) with the purification of the community and its restoration to intimate fellowship with Jehovah.

Marvelous deliverance of Judah and Jerusalem, 1-9.

The prophet beholds the nations of the earth gathered around Jerusalem

CHAPTER XII.

THE burden of the word of the LORD for Israel, saith the LORD, [a]which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and [b]formeth the spirit of man within him. 2 Behold, I will make Jerusalem [c]a cup of [1]trembling unto all the people round about, [2]when they shall be in the siege both against Judah *and* against Jerusalem.

[a] Isa. 42. 5; 44. 24; 45. 12, 18; 48. 13.—[b] Num. 16. 22; Eccl. 12. 7; Isa. 57. 16; Heb. 12. 9.—[c] Isa. 51. 17, 22, 23.—[1] Or, *slumber*, or, *poison*.—[2] Or, *and also against Judah* shall he be *which shall be in siege against Jerusalem*.

to besiege it; Jehovah smites them with terror. When the chieftains of Judah, who seem to have remained inactive during the early part of the struggle, see that Jehovah fights for Jerusalem, they turn their weapons against the nations. Jehovah saves the tents of Judah first, to prevent the inhabitants of Jerusalem from magnifying themselves above Judah, but he delivers Jerusalem also from all danger.

1. **The burden of the word of Jehovah for Israel**—R. V., "concerning Israel." The heading of the entire section xii, 1–xiv, 21, prefixed probably by the collector of the Minor Prophets, who, finding the prophecies without a title, prefixed the words to indicate their general contents (see on ix, 1; compare Mal. i, 1). The oracle itself begins with verse 2. It is introduced by 1b; primarily by "Thus saith Jehovah," to which is added a reference to the creative power of Jehovah, in order to make the utterance more impressive. No matter how wonderful the promises may seem, a God who can create the heavens and the earth will surely be able to fulfill them. The words, therefore, serve the same purpose as Amos iv, 13; v, 8, 9; ix, 5, 6 (see there; compare Isa. xlii, 5). **Stretcheth forth**—Compare Gen. i, 6-8. **Layeth the foundation**—Compare Gen. i, 9, 10; Psa. xxiv, 2. **Formeth the spirit**—Compare Gen. ii, 7. Some recent commentators consider 1b a later insertion.

In verse 2 Jehovah himself is introduced as the speaker. **Behold, I will**—Better, *Behold, I am about to;* the act is imminent (G.-K., 116p). **Make Jerusalem a cup of trembling**—R. V., "of reeling"; a cup or bowl (Exod. xii, 22; 1 Kings vii, 4, 5) that produces trembling or reeling. Jerusalem is pictured as a bowl filled with a tempting drink; eagerly the nations grasp it; but the draught results in their undoing; confused and discomfited they reel and stagger back (compare Hab. ii, 16; Obad. 16). 2b is translated in R. V., "and upon Judah also shall it be in the siege against Jerusalem." A. V. is readily understood. The cup is handed to the nations when they attack Judah and Jerusalem. But what is the meaning of R. V., which is undoubtedly a more literal translation of the Hebrew? The troublesome clause is, "and upon Judah also shall it be." What shall be upon, or against (margin), Judah also? Some say that Jerusalem will become a cup of reeling to Judah as well as to the other nations; which would imply that Judah was expected to make common cause with the nations against Jerusalem. One would hardly look for such an idea, and there is nothing in the rest of the prophecy that would support the idea that Judah was expected to turn against Jerusalem. It is worthy of notice also that the preposition before *all the peoples* is not the same as before *Judah*. Margin R. V. suggests a slightly different translation, "and upon Judah also shall it fall to be," which has been interpreted as meaning that it shall be incumbent upon Judah to be in the siege; that is, Judah will be compelled to join in the siege. Some coördinate "upon Judah" with "concerning Israel" (the same preposition in Hebrew) in the title; that is, the word of Jehovah shall be concerning Judah also. Still others supply the subject

3 [d]And in that day will I make Jerusalem [e]a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it. 4 In that day, saith the LORD, [f]I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness: and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the people with blindness.

[d] Verses 4, 6, 8, 9, 11; chaps. 13. 1; 14. 4, 6, 8, 9, 13.

[e] Matt. 21. 44.—[f] Psa. 76. 6; Ezek. 38. 4.

from the preceding, that which falls upon Jerusalem shall fall upon Judah also; that is, Judah also will be besieged, and Judah also will be made a cup of reeling to the nations. All these translations and interpretations are more or less fanciful and do more or less violence to the text. It is quite certain that the text has suffered in transmission. Geiger, who is followed by others, omits the preposition before *Judah* and reads, "Judah also shall be in the siege of Jerusalem," which might mean that Judah will join in the siege, or that Judah also will suffer when the city is surrounded. The latter is perhaps the thought of the author, but the emendation of Geiger does not remove all difficulties. Marti follows his usual method and omits the troublesome words, and with another change in the last clause he reads verse 2, "Behold, I am about to make Jerusalem a cup of reeling unto all the peoples round about, and there will be a siege of Jerusalem."

Verse 3 reiterates in a different figure the thought of verse 2, that Jerusalem will prove the destruction of the nations that attack it. **A burdensome stone**—Some see here an allusion to a custom spoken of by Jerome as existing in the cities of Palestine in his days. Young men were accustomed to test their strength by lifting and throwing heavy round stones. If the prophecy is as late as Marti would make it these practices may have been known in Jerusalem at the time (compare 2 Macc. iv, 12-15), but if the prophecy is much older a Palestinian author could hardly have known them. Guided partly by a belief in an earlier date and partly by the fact that the stone in this passage is not a round stone, for the people will cut themselves on it, others believe that the author has in mind the use of stones in the erection of buildings. "In vain should all the nations round about seek to fit the stone Jerusalem into any of the political structures which they might seek to erect." Whatever the basis of the figure, the prophet means to say that any attack upon Jerusalem will prove disastrous to those who undertake it. **All people**—Better, R. V., "all the peoples." The surrounding nations (compare last clause, verses 2, 6).

Verse 4 describes more minutely the overthrow of the nations announced in figurative terms in verses 2, 3. **In that day**—When the nations of the earth are gathered against the city. **Horse . . . rider**—The cavalry, which here represents the entire military force of the enemy. **Astonishment, . . . madness**—For the former R. V. reads "terror." The soldiers will be thrown into hopeless confusion, so that they will rush headlong to destruction. **Smite . . . with blindness**—When this happens to the enemies they will be unable to distinguish between friend and foe, and they will turn their swords against their own fellows (Judg. vii, 22; 2 Kings vi, 18; compare Deut. xxviii, 28). **Of the people**—Better, R. V., "peoples." Meanwhile Jerusalem will be safe. **I will open mine eyes**—In watchful care, so that no harm can come near (1 Kings viii, 29; Psa. xxxii, 8). **The house of Judah**—Jerusalem and Judah. Marti omits the last clause, as also verse 5, and reads following "the house of Judah" verse 6. In this way he gets rid of several troublesome clauses, while at the same time the thought connection is improved; but in the absence of all external evidence

5 And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, [3]The inhabitants of Jerusalem *shall be* my strength in the LORD of hosts their God.

6 In that day will I make the governors of Judah [4]like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left: and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, *even* in Jerusalem. 7 The LORD also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jeru-

[3] Or, There is *strength to me* and *to the inhabitants*, etc., Joel 3. 16.——[4] Obad. 18.

many will hesitate to accept the suggestion. To make the reading smoother he omits also verses 7, 8.

As verse 5 stands now it seems to describe the effect produced upon the inhabitants of Judah by the divine manifestation against the enemies. They will be inspired with new hope and courage. **Governors**—R. V., "chieftains." See on ix, 7. Here as there it seems to denote the divisions rather than the leaders. **The inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my strength in Jehovah of hosts their God**—Jehovah has chosen Jerusalem as his dwelling place, hence he cannot permit the hostile nations to occupy it; to prevent its capture he strengthens the inhabitants so that they may drive off the enemy. The inhabitants of the country regions know that Jerusalem is closely united with the rest of Judah, therefore any assistance given to Jerusalem is assistance given to all Judah. In these thoughts the divisions of Judah find their strength and inspiration. The Hebrew is peculiar. A very slight change would give, "Strength is to the inhabitants of Jerusalem in Jehovah of hosts, their God"; and this is preferable.

6. Jehovah will use the forces of Judah to complete the defeat of the nations. **Governors**—As in verse 5. **Like an hearth**—Better, R. V., "like a pan." Judah will utterly destroy the hostile nations as fire devours wood or dry sheaves. **Jerusalem shall be inhabited again**—R. V., more literally, "shall yet again dwell in their own place." If the last clause, "even in Jerusalem," is original, the name is used first of the inhabitants, then of the city. The inhabitants shall again dwell in the city. Since there is no reference to a deportation some have taken *dwell* as equivalent to *dwell in peace*. After the enemies are defeated the inhabitants of Jerusalem shall again dwell in peace. In several important manuscripts of LXX. "even in Jerusalem" is omitted; it may be an accidental repetition. If it is omitted the thought is that Jerusalem will remain unshaken by any of the events just described.

7. **Jehovah also shall save the tents of Judah first**—Though the open country is not defended by strong walls, though its villages may be likened to defenseless tents, the outburst of courage to which attention is called in verses 5, 6 will result in the freeing of the country from enemies, even before the mighty city is delivered. And this is in accord with the divine purpose, for it will prevent boasting on the part of the city over the country. There may have been at this time a tendency among the inhabitants of the capital to despise the country population; if so, this utterance may be meant to counteract this tendency. Instead of *first* some Hebrew manuscripts and the most important ancient versions read "as in former days," which presupposes a change of only one consonant. If this reading is adopted the verse affirms that the deliverance of the future will resemble the wonderful deliverances of the past. **The house of David**—A phrase used ordinarily to denote the dynasty of David. If so here, it points to a time when a descendant of David occupied a position of prominence in the government. How-

salem do not magnify *themselves* against Judah. 8 In that day shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and [h]he that is [4] [5]feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David *shall*

[h] Joel 3. 10.—[4] Or, *abject.*—[5] Heb. *fallen.*

ever, it is not impossible that the phrase is used in the more general sense of *ruling family* or *government.* **Glory**—The martial glory bestowed upon the victor.

8. **In that day**—When Jerusalem is made a cup of reeling (verse 2). **Defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem**—Though Judah will be saved first, Jerusalem also will be delivered; not through the direct interference of Jehovah alone (4), nor through the bravery of Judah (6), but through the efforts of her own inhabitants, who will be endowed with marvelous strength which will make them irresistible. **He that is feeble**—Literally, *he that stumbleth*; one who is unable to stand without assistance (1 Sam. ii, 4). **As David**—The typical hero of Israel (1 Sam. xvii, 34ff.; compare Psa. xviii, 32ff.). The feeble in Jerusalem will become like him. **House of David**—As in verse 7. Here it may include all leaders who in strength and courage resemble David, the Davids. **As God**—These heroes will be endowed with supernatural strength and power; there is no thought of moral excellence. **As the angel of Jehovah before them**—The *angel of Jehovah* is Jehovah manifesting himself in the history of Israel (see on i, 11), especially in leading the armies to victory, when their own strength would fail (Exod. xxiii, 20ff.; Judg. vi, 11ff.). This angel possessed superhuman strength, for he could accomplish that which without him the whole nation could not do. With similar superhuman power the present chieftains will be endowed.

9. While Jehovah thus equips the inhabitants of Jerusalem for the conflict, his wrath is turned against the nations that plan to attack the city. *be* as God, as the angel of the LORD before them.

9 And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* I will seek to [i]destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. 10 [k]And I will pour upon

[i] Verse 3; Hag. 2. 22.—[k] Jer. 31. 9; 50. 4; Ezek. 39. 29; Joel 2. 28.

I will seek to destroy—In itself the expression does not assure the fulfillment of the divine purpose (compare Exod. iv, 24), but in this case the context makes it plain that Jehovah is determined to carry out his purpose.

Penitential mourning and supplication, 10-14.

The blessings vouchsafed in verses 1-9 are purely temporal and physical; but with few exceptions the Messianic anticipations of the prophets include spiritual blessings (compare Hos. xiv, 1-3; Joel ii, 27ff.; Isa. iv, 5, 6). Zechariah is no exception to this rule. He also is convinced that the physical victory will be followed by the outpouring of rich spiritual gifts. The fullness of the latter is not touched upon until xiii, 1ff., but the "spirit of grace and supplication" (verse 10) is one of them. Chapter xii, 10-14, speaks of the preparation of the people for the divine fullness. Like Hosea, our prophet emphasizes repentance as a condition of complete restoration to the favor of God, and of the enjoyment of the spiritual blessings (see p. 605). When the people become fully conscious of the depth of the divine mercy manifesting itself in the wonderful deliverance described in verses 1-9, they will be seized by a heartfelt sorrow for past sins, and in deep humility they will prostrate themselves before Jehovah.

10. **The spirit of grace and of supplications**—See on Joel ii, 28. *Grace* is, as in many other passages in the Old Testament, the favor shown by Jehovah toward his people (compare iv, 7). In this passage it is thought of as active within man, making him conscious of wrongdoing and leading

the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall [l]look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, [m]as one mourneth

[l] John 19. 34, 37; Rev. 1. 7.——[m] Jer. 6. 26; Amos 8. 10.

for *his* only *son*, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for *his* firstborn. **11** In that day shall there be a great [n]mourning in Jerusalem, [o]as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the

[n] Acts 2. 37.——[o] 2 Kings 23. 29; 2 Chron. 35. 24.

him to make supplication for mercy and pardon (compare Rom. ii, 4, "the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance"). **The house of David, . . . the inhabitants of Jerusalem**—The former as in verse 7; the latter may represent the population of the whole land, for the spiritual blessings are surely not to be limited to the inhabitants of the capital. The entire nation, from the rulers down, shall turn in humble penitence to Jehovah, and then they shall become partakers of the spiritual gifts (compare xiii, 1). **They shall look upon me whom they have pierced**—The speaker is Jehovah; the subject of *look* and *have pierced* is *the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem; me* can refer only to Jehovah, whom they have pierced (metaphorically) by their cruel rebellion. The look is one of contrition. **Mourn for him**—The pronoun can refer only to some representative of Jehovah whom they rejected. "The prophet may have pictured to himself the man of God, whom he leaves mysteriously indefinite, as a prophetic national leader, who incurs at the hands of princes and people the fate prepared, according to tradition, by Manasseh for Isaiah, by Jehoiakim for Uriah (Jer. xxvi, 20ff.), and by several rulers almost for Jeremiah." Some interpret *him* as referring to Jehovah himself—*for me.* If so, the change from the first to the third person must be explained by the tendency, which is common in prophetic discourse, not to distinguish clearly between Jehovah and his representative (compare introductory remarks to xi, 4-14). The thought might be expressed more clearly in a paraphrase, "They shall look unto me whom they pierced in the person of my representative, and they shall mourn for him whom they thus cruelly rejected." There may be an allusion to the fate of the good shepherd whom the people rejected (compare xi, 4-14). On the other hand, some see in the representative of Jehovah the good high priest Onias III, who was deposed in 175 and slain in 170 (2 Macc. iv, 27-34). In John xix, 37, this passage is applied to Jesus (see Introduction p. 603f). Some Hebrew manuscripts and some manuscripts of LXX. read *unto him* instead of *upon me*, R. V. *unto me*, and some modern commentators consider it the original. However, it seems preferable to retain the present Hebrew text; the change into *him* is probably due to the desire of a pious Jew to remove a reading which he considered offensive, because it made God himself the object of a murderous attack. The rest of the verse indicates the bitterness of the grief (see on Amos viii, 10).

Verses 11-14 continue the description of the intensity and universality of the lamentation. 11. **Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon**—This expression has received many different interpretations; even the ancient versions differ from one another. At present two views stand out most prominently: (1) The Plain of Megiddo was the scene of one of the most disastrous events in Hebrew history, the fatal wounding of King Josiah (2 Kings xxiii, 29, 30; 2 Chron. xxxv, 20ff.). For many years a public lamentation was held in commemoration of the death of this king (2 Chron. xxxv, 25; compare Jer. xxii, 10); and it is with this mourning over the death of Josiah that the mourning mentioned here is connected by many. *Hadadrimmon* is then unerstood as

valley of Megiddon. **12** [p]And the land shall mourn, [6]every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of [q]Nathan apart, and their wives apart; **13** The family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family [7]of Shimei apart, and their wives apart; **14** All the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart.

[p] Matt. 24. 30; Rev. 1. 7.——[6] Heb. *families, families.*

[q] 2 Sam. 5. 14; Luke 3. 31.——[7] Or, *of Simeon,* as LXX.

the place where Josiah fell. To this interpretation it has been objected that the mourning for Josiah took place in Jerusalem, not at the place of his death. The force of this objection is recognized by many, hence they understand the reference not of the public mourning but of the lamentation which arose as soon as the news of Josiah's fatal injury spread. Another difficulty is presented by the name *Hadadrimmon,* for no place bearing that name has yet been found, though it has been identified with the small village *Rummâneh,* near Megiddo. (2) Some commentators connect the phrase with the weeping for Tammuz (Ezek. viii, 14), who is identical with the Phœnician deity Adonis. The name Hadadrimmon consists of two elements, both names of the storm god, who is thought to be the same as Tammuz-Adonis. That it was customary to hold mournings for the latter is proven by the passage in Ezekiel, but the identification of Hadadrimmon with Adonis is by no means certain; besides, it is exceedingly doubtful that a prophet or any other devout Israelite would illustrate the depth of repentance and sorrow by a reference to an abominable heathen practice. Targum identifies Hadadrimmon with the slayer of King Ahab (1 Kings xxii, 34ff.), but this identification also is improbable; therefore the most probable view is still that which connects the passage with the lamentation for Josiah upon the battlefield, immediately after his fatal wounding.

Verses 12-14 describe the universality of the lamentation. All parts of the community will participate, and all will weep as over the loss of a loved one. **Their wives apart**—The men were the moving spirits in the rejection of the representative of Jehovah, but the women will feel themselves involved in the guilt. For the separation of the sexes compare Exod. xv, 20. **Family**—Is used here not in the narrow sense in which we are accustomed to use the term, but in the wider sense of *clan* or *tribe.* The community is made up of a great number of such; of these four representative families are named; the others are included in "all the families that remain" (verse 14). **David . . . Nathan . . . Levi . . . Shimei**—The last is literally "the Shimeites." Jerome reproduces the rabbinical interpretation of these names thus: "In David the regal tribe is included, that is, Judah; in Nathan the prophetic order is described. Levi refers to the priests, for from him sprang the priesthood. In Simeon the teachers are included, as the companies of masters sprang from that tribe. He says nothing about the other tribes, as they had no special privilege or dignity." So far as Simeon is concerned, the explanation breaks down, for *Shimeites* has no connection with Simeon; it is rather the patronymic of Shimei. Only two of the groups named can be determined with certainty. *House of David* means the successors of David, that is, the civil rulers (see on verse 7); *house of Levi* represents the priesthood, the ecclesiastical rulers. The two are mentioned to indicate that even the most prominent in the community will join in the mourning. *Nathan* might be the well-known prophet bearing that name (2 Sam. vii, 2); if so, *house of Nathan* would denote the prophetic order. In view of xiii, 2ff., this interpretation is improbable; besides, the use of *house* im-

CHAPTER XIII.

IN [a]that day there shall be [b]a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for [1]uncleanness.

[a] Chap. 12. 3.—[b] Heb. 9. 14; 1 Pet. 1. 19; Rev. 1. 5.—[1] Heb. *separation for uncleanness.*

2 And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, *that* I will [c]cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered: and also I will cause [d]the prophets and the unclean

[c] Exod. 23. 13; Josh. 23. 7; Psa. 16. 4; Ezek. 30. 13; Hos. 2. 17; Mic. 5. 12, 13.—[d] 2 Pet. 2. 1.

plied in the interpretation would not be in accord with its use in the other expressions. Perhaps it is better to see here a reference to Nathan, the son of David (2 Sam. v, 14; Luke iii, 31); if so, *house of Nathan* denotes the descendants of this son of David. If this is the correct interpretation, then it becomes quite probable that the other name denotes a branch of the family of Levi, namely, Shimei, the grandson of Levi (Num. iii, 17ff.); the Shimeites are the descendants of this Shimei. Why these two unimportant families should be singled out and placed alongside of the chief representatives we do not know; it may be simply to indicate that the families of prominence as well as those living in obscurity will participate in the mourning.

CHAPTER XIII.

PURIFICATION OF JERUSALEM; REMOVAL OF ALL HINDRANCES TO DIRECT COMMUNION WITH JEHOVAH, 1-6.

The penitential mourning and supplication will not be in vain. Jehovah will be merciful, remove all sin, and bring about a complete moral transformation in the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Intimate fellowship with Jehovah will be restored, and everything that in any way might hinder direct communion will be swept away.

1. **In that day**—When the mourning described in xii, 10-14, will be held. **Shall be a fountain opened**—Chapter xii, 10, ascribes the penitential mourning to the influence of a divinely sent spirit, which creates repentance for sin and leads the people to make penitential supplication; but Jehovah will provide also the means of purification. The figure is adopted in part from the "water of expiation" (Num. viii, 7), and in part from the "water of impurity" (Num. xix, 9; compare Ezek. xxxvi, 25; Psa. li, 9). The water is only the symbol, the power that will remove the sin is divine. **To the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem**—See on xii, 10. High and low will be benefited by the provision. **Sin . . . uncleanness**—It is doubtful that the prophet means to distinguish here between inward sin and outward uncleanness which results from the former. The two terms are practically identical in meaning. Every kind of sin and uncleanness will be washed away. 2. **The names of the idols**—See on Hos. ii, 17. Idolatry will be blotted out so completely that even the names of the idols will be forgotten. **The prophets**—Since they are to be removed, the author evidently thinks that in the new era they will prove a hindrance. Since the prophet played a very prominent part throughout the entire religious history of Israel, many hesitate to believe that this passage means to announce a complete cessation of all prophetic activity, and they see here only a condemnation of the so-called *false* prophets (see on Mic. iii, 7); for this view they find support in the fact that the prophets are mentioned here in close connection with idols and with the unclean spirit. But this fact by no means proves the point; at the most it proves that all prophecy deserves to be abolished like idols. The entire context makes it exceedingly probable that the prophet means to announce the removal of the entire prophetic order. This an-

spirit to pass out of the land. 3 And it shall come to pass, *that* when any shall yet prophesy, then his father and his mother that begat him shall say unto him, Thou shalt not live; for thou speakest lies in the name of the LORD: and his father and his mother that begat him [e]shall thrust him through when he prophesieth. 4 And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* [f]the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision, when he hath prophesied; neither shall they wear [g] [2]a rough garment [3]to deceive: 5 [h]But he shall say, I *am* no prophet, I *am* an husband-

[e] Deut. 13. 6, 8; 18. 20.—[f] Mic. 3. 6, 7.—[g] 2 Kings 1. 8; Isa. 20. 2; Matt. 3. 4.

[2] Heb. *a garment of hair.*—[3] Heb. *to lie.*—[h] Amos 7. 14.

nouncement might be made for one or the other of two reasons, either the entire prophetic order was expected to become so corrupt that it would need to be cut off, or the people as a whole were expected to reach such a perfect knowledge of Jehovah that the prophetic order would be no longer needed. That the author has in mind the prophetic order, and not individuals who might possess a prophetic experience, is clear from verses 4, 5. There is no reason to suppose that as long as prophecy existed the entire prophetic order became corrupt or was expected to become corrupt; at any rate, the utterances of the author of this section prove that in his days there were still men with sublime spiritual visions. On the other hand, Joel ii, 28-30 (compare Jer. xxxi, 34), expresses the expectation that in the Messianic age all flesh would have prophetic experiences, so that there would be no need of a distinct prophetic order. This hope of Joel, far from contradicting the teaching of this passage, interprets it. When all the people are blessed with prophetic visions there will be no need of a prophetic order, hence it will be removed. **Unclean spirit**—Literally, *the spirit of uncleanness;* that is, the spirit, or invisible inner power, which leads to unclean actions (see on Joel ii, 28; compare 1 Kings xxii, 22).

With verse 3 may be compared Deut. xviii, 20, where the death sentence is pronounced upon the prophet who claims to speak in the name of Jehovah when in reality he utters his own words. **Father . . . mother**—In that age the obligations to Jehovah will be more sacred than those arising from the most intimate blood relationship. **Speakest lies . . . prophesieth**—If in that age anyone claims special prophetic gifts, that claim itself proves him to be a liar and impostor, and so worthy of death. **Thrust him through**—Bring to a violent death (compare xii, 10).

4. **In that day**—When all are prophets. **The prophets**—Those who until then were members of the prophetic order. **Shall be ashamed every one of his vision**—A twofold interpretation is possible; either, they will be put to shame because their visions remain unfulfilled (compare Isa. i, 29), or they will be so ashamed of their office that they will withdraw from it. The latter is to be preferred. **When he hath prophesied**—Better, *when he would prophesy;* when the suggestion comes to continue his former activity. **Neither shall they wear a rough garment**—R. V., "hairy mantle." Such mantle was worn by Elijah (2 Kings i, 8) and by John the Baptist (Matt. iii, 4); it may be that this was the conventional garb of the professional prophet; this they will discard. **To deceive**—Any teaching given under the guise of prophecy will be deception, since the era of the prophet as a special teacher has passed.

Verses 5, 6 indicate with what vehemence everyone will deny that he is a prophet **He shall say**—The subject is not *everyone* of verse 4, but the indefinite *one*, "one shall say"=it shall be said (G.-K., 144d), not necessarily by one who has been a prophet, for in such a case the statement would be an untruth, but by anyone who is suspected of claiming (compare verse 6) to be a prophet. **I am no prophet**—

man; for man taught me to keep cattle from my youth. 6 And *one* shall say unto him, What *are* these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, *Those* with which I was wounded *in* the house of my friends.

Compare Amos vii, 14; but here the denial is made for another reason; the speaker disclaims any and all connection with the prophetic office. **Man taught me to keep cattle from my youth**—Better, R. V., "I have been made a bondman from my youth." This answer need not be considered an untruth; and yet it receives additional force if we suppose that the prophet means to teach that in that day a person would rather assume the most despicable position, that of a slave, than be suspected of being a prophet. The reply proves unsatisfactory, and in verse 6 the inquirer is represented as continuing the questioning. **What are these wounds in thine hands?**—R. V., "between thine arms." The suspicion seems to have been aroused in this case by the presence of wounds on the body of the suspect. The last three words have been variously interpreted, as referring to wounds on the palms of the hands, or on the arms, or between the arms, that is, on the breast. The last seems the most probable (compare 2 Kings ix, 24); but the place of the wound is not essential. The nature of the wounds is not certain; they cannot be connected with verse 3; the questioner, connecting them, apparently, with the custom described in 1 Kings xviii, 28 (compare Deut. xiv, 1; Jer. xvi, 6), seems to consider them marks of devotion, self-inflicted in the pursuit of the prophetic office, perhaps in order to create prophetic ecstasy; but this does not imply that he considered the person addressed a heathen or a false prophet, as distinguished from a true prophet. In reply the suspect insists that the wounds have nothing whatever to do with the prophetic office. **I was wounded in the house of my friends**—The last word, literally, *lovers*, or *paramours*, is often used of idols (compare Hos. ii, 7, 10), and some give to it that meaning in this passage. If this is correct the reply contains an admission that at one time the speaker had taken part in idolatrous practices; but even then the form of the verb excludes the idea of self-mutilation. The context favors another interpretation, namely, to take *lovers* or *friends* literally, but not of the speaker's parents, for in verse 5 he states that he has been a bondman from his youth, and the word here is used only of fresh wounds, so that the reference cannot be to punishment received in childhood. He means rather that he received the wounds in a "common brawl" in the house of his friends. The willingness with which he makes the admission indicates how anxious he is to remove all suspicion that he is in any way connected with the prophetic office.

Fate of the Foolish Shepherd and His Flock, 7-9.

These verses appear to stand by themselves; it is exceedingly difficult to establish a connection with xiii, 1-6, or with chapter xiv. Therefore most recent commentators believe that the verses have been accidentally transposed from their original context; they place them after xi, 17, and interpret them as an announcement of judgment upon the foolish shepherd (xi, 15) and his flock—upon the latter because it rejected the good shepherd. The transposition is not supported by any external evidence, but even the English reader can see that xiii, 7-9, is a more suitable continuation of xi, 17, than of xiii, 6, and this conviction grows as one studies the attempts to justify the present position. A comparison of xi, 16+xiii, 7, with Ezek. xxxiv, 4, 5, leads to the same conclusion, which may be accepted as correct.

7. Jehovah is the speaker, who summons the sword (xi, 17) to awake and smite the foolish shepherd (xi,

7 Awake, O sword, against [i]my shepherd, and against the man [k]*that is* my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: [l]smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon [m]the little ones. 8 And it shall come to pass, *that* in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off *and* die; [n]but the third shall be left therein. 9 And I will bring the third part [o]through the fire, and will [p]refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: [q]they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: [r]I will say, It *is* my people: and they shall say, The LORD *is* my God.

[i] Isa. 40. 11; Ezek. 34. 23.—[k] John 10. 30; 14. 10, 11; Phil. 2. 6.—[l] Matt. 26. 31; Mark 14. 27.—[m] Matt. 18. 10, 14; Luke 12. 32.—[n] Rom. 11. 5.—[o] Isa. 48. 10.—[p] 1 Pet. 1. 6, 7.—[q] Psa. 50. 15; 91. 15; chap. 10. 6.—[r] Psa. 144. 15; Jer. 30. 22; Ezek. 11. 20; Hos. 2. 23; chap. 8. 8.

15). **My shepherd**—The foolish shepherd may be called the shepherd of Jehovah, because he was appointed by him. Those who retain the verses in their present position connect the phrase with *him* of xii, 10 (see there), but the other interpretation is preferable. **The man that is my fellow**—The expression of intimacy is not strange, if the foolish shepherd was a high priest (see on xi, 15), for as such he would stand in a peculiarly close relation to Jehovah (compare iii, 7); and this would also be true if he was not an ecclesiastical but a civil ruler. The foolish shepherd will be punished because he ill-treated the flock, and the flock will suffer because it rejected the good shepherd (xi, 4-14). **Shall be scattered**—Because they will be without a shepherd (compare Nah. iii, 18). **I will turn mine hand upon the little ones**—Better, *against;* for this is not a promise of help but the continuation of the threat. *Little ones* refers not to the shepherd boys, but to the lambs; the provocation has been so great that he cannot spare even the young of the flock (compare Isa. ix, 17).

Verses 8, 9 expand the announcement of verse 7. In the judgment to come two parts of the flock shall be cut off; only one part shall escape; but even this third part is not ready to enjoy the presence and favor of Jehovah; it needs purification (compare Jer. ix, 7; Isa. vi, 13). **Fire**—Since fire is used for the purification of metals, it becomes a symbol of every means of purification, in this case of affliction and judgment (Isa. iv, 4; compare Isa. i, 25ff.). The purification accomplished, the purified remnant (see on Amos v, 15) will enjoy closest fellowship with Jehovah. **I will hear them**—When they pray (compare Psa. l, 15; xxxiv, 15-17). For the rest of the verse see on Hos. ii, 23.

CHAPTER XIV.

Final Conflict and Triumph of Jerusalem, 1-21.

Chapter xiv is an independent piece. The struggle depicted in the first few verses is not the one described in xii, 1-9; nor can these verses be considered "a further expansion of the summary announcement of the judgment upon Israel, and its refinement (xiii, 7-9)." The prophet beholds a new conflict between Jerusalem and the nations. In xii, 1-9, the enemies are described as smitten before they are able to capture the city; here the announcement is that "the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished, and half of the city shall go forth into captivity." Only then will Jehovah appear for the salvation of a remnant and for the setting up of his kingdom (1-7). From Jerusalem, the dwelling place of Jehovah, two streams of living water will go forth covering the whole land with blessing and fertility (8-11). The nations that have come to war against Jerusalem will be destroyed, and their wealth will be given to the Jews (12-15). Those who escape will turn to Jehovah in true worship; those who refuse to do so will be smitten with drought (16-19). Jerusalem and Ju-

CHAPTER XIV.

BEHOLD, [a]the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. 2 For [b]I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and [c]the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. 3 Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.

4 And his feet shall stand in that day [d]upon the mount of Olives, which *is* before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, [e]*and there shall be* a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove to-

[a] Isa. 13. 9; Joel 2. 31; Acts 2. 20.—[b] Joel 3. 2.

[c] Isa. 13. 16.—[d] See Ezek. 11. 23.—[e] Joel 3. 12, 14.

dah and all that is in them will be holy unto Jehovah (20, 21).

Capture and deliverance of Jerusalem, 1-7.

1. **Behold, . . . cometh**—Better, *Behold, . . . is about to come.* The coming is imminent (G.-K., 116p). **Day of Jehovah**—Literally, *a day is about to come for Jehovah.* The day is the *day of Jehovah* mentioned so frequently by the prophets (see on Joel i, 15). In 1b Jerusalem is addressed. The prophet does not stop to describe the struggle; he passes immediately to the outcome and states that the city will be taken and plundered. **In the midst of thee**—Indicates the completeness of the defeat; the enemy will gain complete possession of the city.

In verse 2, which is omitted by some as a later expansion of verse 1, the prophet pictures the struggle in greater detail. **I will gather all nations**—The rest of the verse would seem to indicate that Jehovah sends them to execute judgment upon the city (compare Isa. x, 5, 6; not so in Joel iii, 2, 9-11; Ezek. xxxviii, 39). The city will be taken, and the conquerors will spare nothing. **The women ravished**—A practice not uncommon in ancient warfare (see on Amos vii, 17; Joel iii, 3). **Half**—In a general sense—a portion. One portion will be carried into exile, the other will be allowed to remain in the city (compare xiii, 8).

3 **Then**—When the conflict will have reached this stage Jehovah will interfere. **Shall Jehovah go forth**—To fight and destroy the nations. Why he will do this after commissioning them to execute judgment upon the city is not stated. It may be because they will go beyond their commission (compare Isa. x, 7). **As when he fought in the day of battle**—Refers to all the occasions in the past when Jehovah fought for Israel (Josh. x, 14, 42; xxiii, 3; Judg. iv, 15, etc.). These acts of the past will be repeated.

4. He will appear as a warrior. **The mount of Olives**—Since Jerusalem is in the hands of the hostile nations Jehovah cannot be represented as coming from Mount Zion (compare Amos i, 2); he will come from his heavenly dwelling place (Joel iii, 16), and take his stand upon the mountain east of the city, whence he can get a good view of the scene of conflict. The term *mount of Olives* occurs only here in the Old Testament, though the mountain itself is spoken of several times (see Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible*, article "Mount of Olives"). To accomplish the deliverance of the remnant Jehovah must employ supernatural powers. **Shall cleave**—R. V., "shall be cleft." As soon as Jehovah steps upon it, for before him the whole earth trembles (Exod. xix, 18; Judg. v, 5; Hab. iii, 5ff.). It will cleave from east to west; as a result the northern and southern portions will be separated, and when they recede, the one to the north, the other to the south, a great valley is formed between which will serve as a place of refuge for the remnant that is still in the city. It need hardly be stated that

ward the north, and half of it toward the south. 5 And ye shall flee *to* the valley of [1]the mountains; [2]for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the [f]earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: [g]and the LORD my God shall come, *and* [h]all the saints with thee. 6 And it shall come to

[1] Or, *my mountains.*—[2] Or, *when he shall touch the valley of the mountains to the place he separated.*

[f] Amos 1. 1.—[g] Matt. 16. 27; 24. 30, 31; 25. 31; Jude 14.—[h] Joel 13. 11.

the whole description is figurative, and that it was never intended to be understood literally.

The translation and interpretation of verse 5 are uncertain, and it is not improbable that the text has suffered. **Ye shall flee**—This is the reading of the text in the common Hebrew Bibles. The eastern Masorites and some of the ancient versions favor the reading of margin R. V., "the valley of my mountains shall be stopped." The Greek versions read a form of *stop* in all three places where the English has a form of *flee;* support for this reading is found also in Josephus (Antiquities, ix, 10, 4). What the meaning of this reading would be is not quite certain; it may be that at a given place the valley comes to an end. The common reading is very appropriate. In the day when Jehovah appears the survivors will flee to the valley (verse 4) prepared as a place of refuge. **The valley of the mountains**—Literally, *of my mountains.* This must be the valley of verse 4. The mountains are called by Jehovah *my* mountains because he made them by stepping upon the Mount of Olives (verse 4). In the second clause also we should read, perhaps, "*my* mountains." **Azal**—An obscure word. It is not even certain whether or not it is a proper name. If it is it must be a place name, which may be identical with *Beth-ezel* (Mic. i, 11), whose location is not known. According to Cyril it is a village to the east of Mount Olives, but his statement is based upon mere hearsay. It would have to be sought some distance from Jerusalem, for the purpose of the prophet seems to be to indicate the great extent of the valley; it will be large enough to accommodate all. The flight of the people will be like their flight, or rather like the flight of their ancestors, on the occasion of a terrible earthquake. The point of comparison is the swiftness and anxiety with which they will seek a place of refuge. **In the days of Uzziah**—See p. 195. This earthquake is mentioned again in Amos i, 1, but nothing more is known concerning it. It must have been a serious calamity, else the memory of it would not have remained alive for so many centuries.

The transition to the last part of verse 5 is somewhat abrupt. It gives the full reason for Jehovah's coming. To fight against the nations is only one reason; his ultimate purpose is to establish his kingdom upon earth with Jerusalem as the center. When he comes he will be accompanied by his heavenly attendants. **All the saints**—Literally, and R. V., "all the holy ones"—the heavenly host, the angels, who will assist Jehovah in the struggle against the nations (Deut. xxxiii, 2; Job v, 1). **With thee**—LXX. and Peshitto read "with him," which is probably original.

Verses 6, 7 are not the continuation of verses 1-5, they are rather parallel to them. They describe in apocalyptic imagery the struggle that is pictured in 1-5. R. V. reads verse 6, "And it shall come to pass in that day, that there shall not be light; the bright ones shall withdraw themselves." With the present Hebrew text the translation of R. V. is to be preferred. The day on which Jehovah will make his appearance will be a dismal and dreary day (see on Joel ii, 2, 31; iii, 15; compare Isa. xiii, 10; Ezek. xxxii, 7, 8; Matt. xxiv, 29; Rev. vi, 12). There will be no light, because the heavenly lights will van-

pass in that day [3]*that* the light shall not be [4]clear, *nor* [5]dark: **7** But [6]it shall be [i]one day [k]which shall be known to the LORD, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, *that* at [l]evening time it shall be light. **8** And it shall be in that day, *that* living [m]waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the [7]former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be. **9** And the LORD shall be [n]king over all the earth: in that day shall there be [o]one LORD, and his name one. **10** All the land shall be [8]turned [p]as a plain

[3] *i. e.* it shall not be clear in some places and dark in other places of the world.——[4] Heb. *precious.*——[5] Heb. *thickness.*——[6] Or, *the day shall be one.*——[i] Rev. 22. 5.——[k] Matt. 24. 36.——[l] Isa. 30. 26; 60. 19, 20; Rev. 21. 23.——[m] Ezek. 47. 1; Joel 3. 18; Rev. 22. 1.——[7] Or, *eastern*, Joel 2. 20.——[n] Dan. 2. 44; Rev. 11. 15.——[o] Eph. 4. 5, 6.——[8] Or, *compassed.*——[p] Isa. 40. 4.

ish. **The bright ones** (R. V.)—The lights of Gen. i, 14-18. **Withdraw themselves** (R. V.)—They draw in their brightness (Joel ii, 10; iii, 15).

7. The result is not absolute darkness, but the deep gloom of a cloudy day. **One day**—A unique, unparalleled day, well known to Jehovah. **Not day, nor night**—Unbroken dismal gloom, as if light and darkness were struggling for supremacy with one another; however, darkness shall not prevail. **At evening time it shall be light**—"The new creation shall be ushered in, as the first was, by a day of lurid gloom and *darkness visible*, which shall not, however, deepen into night, but brighten at its close into the everlasting dawn."

This interpretation is based upon the assumption that the present Hebrew text of verses 6, 7 is substantially correct. Some consider the two verses a continuation of verses 1-5, describing the conditions that will prevail after the divine interference; but such interpretation demands several emendations of the text. Marti, for example, reads verses 6, 7 partly on the basis of LXX., "Nor will there be any heat and cold and frost. And it will be one continuous day, without a change of day and of night; even at evening time it will be day."

Fertility and prosperity of the whole land, 8-11.

8. When the kingdom of Jehovah is established, with Jerusalem as the center, the whole land will be blessed with [q]ertility and prosperity. **Living waters**—See on Joel iii, 18. A picture of the powers producing extreme fertility. **Former sea, . . . hinder sea**—R. V., "eastern sea, . . . western sea"—the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean (see on Joel ii, 20). The picture of the water flowing in both directions is meant to teach that the whole land will be benefited. **In summer and in winter**—Most rivers in Palestine contain water only during the rainy season, from October until April; the promised streams will be perennial; they will retain their water and give out fertility all the year round.

9. The temporal blessings will be accompanied by spiritual gifts. **Jehovah shall be king**—He will be ruler, counselor, protector (see on Joel ii, 27; iii, 17). **Over all the earth**—The context requires the translation "over all the land," that is, of Judah (compare Zeph. i, 18; ii, 3). The extension of Jehovah's rule over the nations is spoken of in verses 16ff. R. V. renders 9b, "in that day shall Jehovah be one, and his name one," which is more accurate. **Jehovah shall be one** (R. V.)—Throughout the entire land he will be recognized as the one and only God; idolatry will disappear completely (xiii, 2; see on Joel ii, 27). **His name one**—See on Amos ii, 7; Mic. v, 4; Joel ii, 27. The manifold activities of Jehovah will no longer be ascribed to different deities (compare xiii, 2), nor will any name but his be used in worship.

10. The presence of Jehovah will bring about a complete transformation of the land. **As a plain**—R. V., "like the Arabah." The word may be rendered as a proper name (R. V.;

from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem: and it shall be lifted up, and [q] [9]inhabited in her place, from Benjamin's gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, [r]and *from* the tower of Hananeel unto the king's winepresses. 11 And *men* shall dwell in it, and there shall be [s]no more utter destruction; [t]but Jerusalem [10]shall be safely inhabited.

[q] Chap. 12. 6.—[9] Or, *shall abide.*—[r] Neh. 3. 1; 12. 39; Jer. 31. 38.

[s] Jer. 31. 40.—[t] Jer. 23. 6.—[10] Or, *shall abide.*

see on Amos vi, 14), or as a common noun (A. V.). Probably the latter is to be preferred here. The whole country, with the exception of Jerusalem, will be made into a level plain. The Arabah is more than a thousand feet below the sea level immediately east of Jerusalem. The thought of fertility does not seem to be implied; as a matter of fact, the Arabah, with the exception of a few isolated tracts, is barren and unfruitful. The extent of the district to be thus transformed is indicated more definitely. **From Geba**—In the tribe of Benjamin (Josh. xviii, 24), now *Jeba*, about five miles north of Jerusalem, at the time of Josiah and perhaps throughout a long period the northern boundary of Judah (2 Kings xxiii, 8). **Rimmon**—Distinguished by the addition "south of Jerusalem" from a Rimmon in the north (Josh. xix, 13). The one mentioned here marks the southern border of Palestine (Josh, xv, 32; xix, 7); now *Umm-er-Rummanîn*; it is located only a short distance north of Beersheba (2 Kings xxiii, 8). While this region, which is meant to include the whole of Judah, is leveled to a plain, Jerusalem will be elevated. **Lifted up**—The city, which is built upon two mountain spurs, will retain its elevation, or will be raised even higher (see on Mic. iv, 1; compare Isa. ii, 2). The exalted position will proclaim it the center of the kingdom of God. **Shall be . . . inhabited in her place**—Better, R. V., "shall dwell in her place"; that is, it will be established forever. As of the land, so of the city, its full extent is indicated. The localities mentioned cannot all be identified. **Benjamin's gate**—May be identical with *gate of Ephraim* (2 Kings xiv, 13; Neh. viii, 16; xii, 39), in the north wall of the city, through which led the road to Ephraim and Benjamin (compare Jer. xx, 2). **The place of the first gate**—This gate is otherwise unknown; some identify it with the *corner gate* mentioned immediately afterward; the latter is thought to stand in apposition to the former for the purpose of explaining an uncommon designation. This is improbable. Others identify it with the *old gate* (Neh. xii, 39), as marking the eastern end of the north wall. Much uncertainty remains. **Corner gate**—Mentioned again in 2 Kings xiv, 13; Jer. xxxi, 38; it was located at the west end of the northern wall. All three points seem to indicate the northern boundary of the city and its extent from east to west. **Tower of Hananeel**—Probably in the northeast corner (Neh. iii, 1; xii, 39). **The king's winepresses**—The exact location of these is not known; it is probable, however, that they were near the king's garden (Neh. iii, 15), which is to be sought near the palace in the southern part of the city. If so, this location would mark the southern boundary of the city. The localities named may have been of special prominence in the days of the author. The first three seem to indicate the extent of the city from east to west, the last two from north to south. Marti omits all but the first and the last, "from the Benjamin's gate to the king's winepresses," which he thinks are to indicate the extent of Jerusalem from north to south.

11. The city will be inhabited. **No more utter destruction**—R. V., "no more curse." Sin has been wiped away (xiii, 1, 9); therefore no further judgments are needed (compare Jer. xxv, 9; Isa. xliii, 28; Mal. iv, 6). **Shall be safely inhabited**—Better, R.

12 And this shall be the plague wherewith the LORD will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth. 13 And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* [u]a great tumult from the LORD shall be among them; and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbor, and [x]his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbor. 14 And [11]Judah also shall fight [12]at Jerusalem; [y]and the wealth of all the heathen round about shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel in great abundance. 15

[u] 1 Sam. 14. 15, 20.—[x] Judg. 7. 22; 2 Chron. 20. 23; Ezek. 38. 21.—[11] Or, *thou also, O Judah, shalt.*—[12] Or, *against.*—[y] Ezek. 39. 10, 17, etc.

V., "shall dwell safely." The city need not fear any hostile attacks or calamities of any sort.

Destruction of the hostile nations, 12-15.

While Jerusalem and the Jews will be exalted and glorified, Jehovah will utterly destroy all the nations that have dared to lift their hands against the holy city. Some will be destroyed by pestilence (12, 15), some will be slain in the confusion that is produced among the hostile armies at the blows of Jehovah (13), some will be cut off by the inhabitants of Judah,who then will be enriched by the spoil. Verse 15 forms the natural continuation of verse 12; therefore several recent commentators consider verses 13, 14 a later insertion. If they are original, a more logical order would be 12, 15, 13, 14. A disastrous pestilence strikes the camp (12, 15), which produces panic and confusion (13); when this is seen by the Jews they rush against the enemies, cut them down, and take to themselves their possessions (14).

12. **Plague**—Or, *pestilence.* A word always used of a plague or punishment sent directly by Jehovah. The nature of the disease is described in the rest of the verse. **Fought against Jerusalem**—See on verses 1, 2. **Their flesh shall consume away**—Literally (G.-K., 113y), *he* (Jehovah) *will cause their flesh to rot.* **While they stand upon their feet**—While they are still alive. To show further the terribleness of the plague the destruction of the eyes and tongue, important members of the human body, is specified. The prophet probably did not intend these expressions to be pressed too literally. He makes the description so vivid simply to indicate the awfulness of the calamity, whatever might be its exact character.

13. Additional disaster will result from a panic into which the enemies are thrown; then the terrified soldiers will turn their weapons against one another (compare Judg. vii, 22; 1 Sam. xiv, 20; 2 Chron. xx, 23). **A great tumult from Jehovah**—Jehovah will cause the tumult or confusion through the blow described in verse 12. **Lay hold . . . on the hand**—Seize, to destroy. **His hand shall rise up**—The hand is said to rise up because it holds the weapon; equivalent to "he shall rise up against his neighbor." 14. The defeat of the nations is made complete by the Jews who, when they behold the ranks of the enemies thinned by pestilence and mutual slaughter, will rush upon the helpless remnant. **Shall fight at Jerusalem**—Targum and Vulgate, "against Jerusalem"; but the context forbids this interpretation. It means *at* or *near* the city, where the events described in verses 12, 13 will take place. **Judah**—Not only the country districts (xii, 5, 6, 7), but the whole people. With the army destroyed, the camp with all its rich treasures will fall into the hands of the victors. The punishment will be according to the *lex talionis* (compare verse 2).

Verse 15 is the continuation of verse 12 (see introductory remarks on this section). A plague as disastrous as that which smites the men (verse 12) will destroy the beasts of the hostile

And [a]so shall be the plague of the horse, of the mule, of the camel, and of the ass, and of all the beasts that shall be in these tents, as this plague.

16 And it shall come to pass, *that* every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even [a]go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep [b]the feast of tabernacles. 17 [c]And it shall be, *that* whoso will not come up of *all* the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. 18 And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, [13] [d]that

[a] Verse 12.——[a] Isa. 60. 6, 7, 9; 66. 23. ——[b] Lev. 23. 34, 43; Neh. 8. 14; Hos. 12. 9; John 7. 2.——[c] Isa. 60. 12.——[13] Heb. *upon whom* there is *not*.——[d] Deut. 11. 10.

army. **Horse**—The beast of war. **Mule, . . . camel, . . . ass**—Beasts of burden. **All the beasts**—Cattle and other animals carried along for food (compare Josh. vii, 24). The last words, "as this plague," should, perhaps, be omitted; they are superfluous and make the reading awkward. In this wise all the wrongs done to the people of Jehovah will be avenged.

The conversion of a remnant of the nations, 16-19.

The survivors among the nations will cease their rebellion and turn to Jehovah. If any fail to do this they will be smitten with his curse.

16. **Every one that is left**—Few, if any, will escape from the catastrophe described in verses 12-15, but since the judgment is expected to fall before Jerusalem the noncombatants at home will be spared. These will see the hand of God in the disaster that befalls their armies; they will recognize his supremacy, and will render homage to him as their King and God. The conversion of the nations is pictured under the figure of annual pilgrimages to the temple. **From year to year**—Three times a year all males among the Jews were required to appear before Jehovah (Deut. xvi, 16; compare Exod. xxiii, 17; xxxiv, 23). For the converts from the more distant lands one such pilgrimage appears to have been considered sufficient. **Feast of tabernacles**—One of the three occasions mentioned in Deut. xvi, 16. Various reasons have been suggested why this rather than one of the others is selected here. The more important are: (1) The feast of tabernacles came in autumn, when traveling is most pleasant and convenient. (2) It was primarily an agricultural feast, celebrated at the close of the harvest season; in it all the nations of the earth might join to give thanks for the blessings of nature. (3) It was the last and most joyful of all the great festivals in the year, gathering up into itself, as it were, the year's worship. (4) It more than any other would typify the ingathering of the nations into the kingdom of God. Which of these explanations is correct, or whether or not there is any special reason for mentioning the feast of tabernacles, it is difficult to say.

17. Those who fail to take part in the harvest festival of thanksgiving will be punished by the withholding of rain during the following year, which will result in the failure of crops and in famine. The withholding of rain is mentioned to carry to completion the figure in verse 16. As the celebration of the harvest festival symbolizes the conversion of the nations, so the withholding of the rain symbolizes the withdrawal of all God's blessings.

The text of verse 18, as it stands at present, offers considerable difficulty. R. V. differs but slightly in its translation from A. V.; for "that have no rain" it reads "neither shall it be upon them." All becomes smooth if, following LXX. and Peshitto, we omit one negative and alter the accentuation; then the verse will read, "And if the family of Egypt go not up and come not, upon them shall come the plague wherewith Jehovah will smite . . ." **Family**—Nation (compare

have no *rain;* there shall be the plague, wherewith the LORD will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. 19 This shall be the [14]punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.

20 In that day shall there be upon the [15]bells of the horses, [e]HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the LORD'S house shall be like the bowls before the altar. 21 Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the LORD of hosts: and all they that

[14] Or, *sin.*—[15] Or, *bridles.*

[e] Isa. 23. 18.

Amos iii, 1). **Egypt**—Egypt is singled out because of the peculiar condition of its climate. It is not dependent directly on rain for fertility, but on the overflowing of the Nile, caused by heavy rainfall in Ethiopia, south of Egypt. The threat of verse 18, therefore, would have no special terror for Egypt, and some might think that Egypt could refuse to worship Jehovah. Not so, says the prophet; Egypt also must go or suffer severe punishment. **Plague**—The context suggests that it also will consist in drought and failure of the crops; there seems to be no reference to the plague of verse 12.

Verse 19 concludes the section with a reiteration of the threat. **Punishment**—Literally, *sin;* here equivalent to *punishment for sin* (Num. xxxii, 23).

Jerusalem and Judah holy unto Jehovah, 20, 21.

From the description of the destiny of the hostile nations the prophet returns to complete the description of the glory of the city and land of Jehovah; verses 20, 21, therefore, are in a sense the continuation of verse 11. Jerusalem and Judah will be freed from everything that is unclean and, with all their contents, will be holy unto Jehovah. **Bells of the horses**—The reference may be to bells worn by the horses or to metal plates —which would make a tinkling sound when the horses moved—upon which was inscribed the name of the owner. Horses are frequently mentioned by the prophets as beasts of war and splendor (compare ix, 10; x, 5); in the new age they will no longer be used for warlike enterprises, they will be devoted exclusively to the service of Jehovah, whose name will be inscribed upon the bells or plates as that of the owner. **Holiness**—R. V., "Holy." The noun is used in the Hebrew in the place of the adjective for the sake of emphasis (G.-K., 141c). **Unto Jehovah**—The same inscription was found upon a gold plate in the mitre of the high priest (Exod. xxviii, 36, 38), to designate him as a person consecrated to the service of Jehovah. This is the meaning here as in verse 21. "When it [the word *holy*] is applied to things it expresses the idea that they belong to Jehovah, are used in his service or dedicated to him, or are in some special way his property" (A. B. Davidson, *The Theology of the Old Testament,* p. 253; see on Joel ii, 1). **The pots in Jehovah's house**—The earthen vessels in which the flesh of the sacrifice was cooked for priests and laymen (1 Sam. ii, 14; 2 Chron. xxxv, 13), whose use was therefore semi-secular. **Shall be like the bowls before the altar**—The vessels serving semi-secular and unimportant purposes will in the new era be as sacred and holy as the bowls in which is caught the blood of the sacrificial animals (Num. iv, 14; compare Zech. ix, 15). These bowls possessed a special degree of sanctity, because the blood was considered peculiarly sacred by the Hebrews. Some see the point of comparison not in the sanctity but in the size; but this is less probable.

In verse 21 the prophet goes even further. The whole land will be Jehovah's (verses 9-11); by that very fact it will be made holy unto him (see on verse 20; Joel ii, 1), and this holiness will attach to everything found in the land. **Every pot**—Not

sacrifice shall come and take of them and seethe therein: and in that day there shall be no more the [f]Canaanite in [g]the house of the LORD of hosts.

[f] Isa. 35. 8; Joel 3. 17; Rev. 21. 27; 22. 15.

[g] Eph. 2, 19–22.

only the vessels in the temple, but also those used in private homes for secular purposes; they will possess in the new age the same sanctity as the former. **They that sacrifice**—Strangers from the distance, who cannot carry with them sacrificial implements, but have to secure them after their arrival in the city. **Take of them**—As many as they need, without fear that they will secure an unclean vessel. **Canaanite**—Some take this word in a commercial sense, *merchant, trafficker* (see on Hos. xii, 7), and they interpret the passage as meaning that, since any vessel the worshiper may lay his hand on will serve his purpose, there will be no further need of merchants selling these wares in the temple (compare Matt.xxi, 12; John ii, 14). Others take the word literally of the inhabitants of Canaan, and they think that it refers to the Canaanites employed to perform the lowest duties in the temple. Still others expand the application of the term so as to include all unclean persons, whether Jews or foreigners. All such will disappear, for both men and things throughout Judah and Jerusalem will be holy unto Jehovah. Between these interpretations it is difficult to choose. With the second may be compared Ezek. xliv, 9; but the context favors the first.

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF MALACHI.

The Author of the Prophecy.

In the case of all the other books in the collection of the Minor Prophets the confession had to be made that little or nothing was known of the authors. Here the uncertainty extends even to the name, for it may be questioned whether *Malachi* is a proper name at all. If a noun, the word means *my messenger* or *my angel,* which is not quite suitable for a child's name. Some take it to be an adjective, like Haggai, meaning *angelic;* others consider it an abbreviated form of a name meaning *messenger of Jehovah.* This etymology is more or less doubtful, because names formed after the same pattern would suggest the translation *my messenger is Jehovah,* which again is unsuitable.

Analogy with the other books would seem to favor the view that the name prefixed to a book is the name of its author, but over against this one argument there have been adduced several which are thought to favor the view that the prophecy is anonymous and that *Malachi* was introduced at a later time from iii, 1, where the same Hebrew word is translated "my messenger" or "my angel"; and from this passage it has even been conjectured that the author of the book was an incarnate angel. (1) The similarity of Mal. i, 1, with Zech. ix, 1; xii, 1, the titles of two anonymous utterances, favors the view that the former also was added not by the author of the book but by the collector to whom all three utterances came without headings. He, understanding "my messenger" in iii, 1, as being in some way a designation of the author or a term descriptive of his office and so capable of being applied to him symbolically, embodied that expression in

the title of the book. (2) The name occurs nowhere else in the Old Testament. (3) LXX. and Targum, the two oldest translations, did not understand it as a proper name; the former reads "by the hand of his messenger"; the latter, "by the hand of my messenger, whose name is called Ezra the Scribe"; and for a long time Jewish tradition identified the author of this book with Ezra. (4) The absence of the father's name, which is found in the case of most other prophets (but compare Obad. 1; Hab. i, 1).

These arguments are not absolutely conclusive, and the question cannot be settled finally. Whatever the original significance, by the second century A.D. *Malachi* had come to be generally accepted as a proper name. The identification of the author with Ezra is improbable; the tradition undoubtedly arose from the fact that Ezra and the author of the prophecy pursued similar ends. The *Life of the Prophets* (see p. 429) calls him a Levite from Sopha in the tribe of Zebulun, but this tradition is late and without value. From his familiarity with the priests and their conduct it has been conjectured that he himself was a priest, but this view also is without adequate support.

But whoever he was, or whatever his name, the author of the Book of Malachi is worthy to be called a "messenger of Jehovah." He was a man of deep convictions, born of a personal religious experience and constant communion with God; a man with deep insight into the needs and shortcomings of his contemporaries as well as into the mysteries of the divine love and purpose, which, he declared, would find its culmination in the establishment of the kingdom of God subsequent to the awful catastrophe of the day of Jehovah. Following in the footsteps of his great predecessors, this prophet declared, with no uncertain sound, the will of Jehovah to a priesthood and a people that had forgotten the covenant of old; he, like the earlier prophets, announced the certain and awful doom of the faithless and the exaltation and glorification of the faithful.

The Time of the Prophet.

1. *Date.*—It is universally admitted that the internal evidence points to the postexilic period, when the Jews were under a governor (i, 8), and the Edomites had been driven from their old home (i, 2ff.; see there), as the time in which the prophecies contained in the Book of Malachi were delivered. All are agreed also in fixing the date of Malachi later than the days of Haggai and Zechariah. The temple was completed, and the sacrificial service was in full force; there had been enough time to allow the enthusiasm aroused by the two prophets to die down and the temple worship to become corrupted (Mal. i, 6ff.; ii, 1ff.; iii, 1, 10). The moral and religious offenses condemned by our prophet are different from those condemned by the two prophets who urged the rebuilding of the temple. On the other hand, a comparison with the books of Ezra and Nehemiah shows that the sins condemned by Malachi and the reforms attempted by him are very largely the sins condemned and the reforms urged by them. This fact has led all scholars to bring the preaching of Malachi into close connection with the efforts of these two great reformers. "The last chapter of canonical Jewish history is the key to the last chapter of its prophecy."

At this point arises a difference of opinion. Some place the activity of Malachi before the coming of Ezra in 458, or at least before the first visit of Nehemiah, about 445; others place it near the second visit of Nehemiah, about 432, either before or soon after. However, it is chiefly around two periods, before 458 or near 432, that the attempts to determine the date of Malachi center.

In favor of the later date the following facts are urged: 1. First and foremost, the close agreement between Malachi and Nehemiah. The abuses which the latter sought to remove were (1) the irreverent behavior of the high priest; (2) the neglect of the temple service; (3) the nonpayment of tithes; (4) the desecration of the Sabbath; (5) marriage alliances with heathen women. A comparison of Neh. xiii, 23ff. (com-

pare also Ezra ix, 1ff.; x, 1ff.), with Mal. ii, 10-16; Neh. iii, 10-12, 31, with Mal. i, 7ff., iii, 8-10; Neh. xiii, 29, with Mal. ii, 8, shows that Malachi aimed to abolish similar forms of wrongdoing. Nehemiah does not mention divorce and Malachi does not mention Sabbath desecration; in all other respects the resemblance is very close. 2. The appeal for a closer observance of the law of Moses (iv, 4) presupposes the efforts of Ezra to restore the authority of the law (Neh. viii—x). 3. The condemnation of the sacrifices (i, 7ff.) and the unfaithfulness in the bringing of tithes and offerings (iii, 6ff.) presupposes that the people were expected to provide for the sanctuary and the priests, but in the days of Ezra, or at any rate immediately after his arrival, the government met the expense of the temple service (Ezra vii, 15-24), and similar provision was made by Darius (Ezra vi, 9, 10). On the other hand, Neh. x, 33ff., indicates that in Nehemiah's day provision was made for the support of the temple service by the people; but the condemnation by Malachi points to a neglect of these voluntary contributions, which makes it quite probable that some time had elapsed since the obligations were assumed. 4. While i, 8, does not exclude the possibility of Nehemiah being governor, the reference becomes more natural on the assumption that a foreign governor, who was not unwilling to accept gifts from the people (compare Neh. v, 14ff.), was ruling over the Jews at the time. Since some of these facts exclude a date preceding Ezra, and some a date immediately after the coming of Ezra, a date during the absence of Nehemiah, between his first and second visit to Jerusalem, is most probable. 5. To the same period points the attitude of the prophet toward heathen marriages. If Ezra's reform was as sweeping as is indicated in Ezra x, 16, 17, some time must have elapsed before the same abuses broke out afresh. No attempt was made by Nehemiah to abolish these marriages until his second visit, which makes it probable that the abuse arose again during his brief absence. In opposition to this new outbreak Malachi uttered his denunciations, either

while Nehemiah was still away or after his return. 6. The fact that Nehemiah found the abuses condemned by Malachi in full swing makes it improbable that the latter had already delivered his messages, for it is difficult to assume that his earnest exhortations were all in vain.

These are the more important grounds on which many scholars assign the prophetic activity of Malachi to about 432, either during the absence of Nehemiah or after his return in connection with the reforms mentioned in Neh. xiii, 6ff. "The work of Malachi," says Keil, "bore the same relation to the work of Nehemiah as the work of Haggai and Zechariah to that of Zerubbabel and Joshua; and the reformatory labors of Nehemiah, which were chiefly of an outward character, were accompanied by the more inward labors of Malachi, as was very frequently the case in the history of Israel; for example, in the case of Isaiah and Hezekiah, or of Jeremiah and Josiah."

Against this view and in favor of the earlier date the following facts may be pointed out: 1. Objections 4, 5, 6 hold good only against the view that Malachi prophesied subsequently to the coming of Ezra; they have no force against the claim that he prophesied before 458, for then a foreign governor ruled over the Jews, foreign women had been married when Ezra arrived, and his preaching at the earlier date would allow ample time for a revival of the abuses rectified by Nehemiah in 432. 2. The third argument is disposed of by the fact that there is no indication that between 516 and 458 the expense of the temple service was borne by the government. 3. The second argument also is by no means conclusive. That the Jews possessed some laws even before the public reading of it in 445 or 444 cannot be doubted. Why might not a religious zealot like Malachi urge the observance of the law even before Ezra and Nehemiah? The argument falls down completely if it can be shown that the closing verses are not original (see comments). 4. This leaves only the first argument, the similarity between Malachi and Neh.

xiii, 6ff. That mixed marriages existed in 458 or even earlier cannot be doubted, for Ezra found them in considerable numbers on his return. Divorce is not mentioned by Nehemiah, hence it cannot have been a serious evil in his day. On the other hand, it should be noted that Malachi connects the divorce evil very closely with the marrying of foreign women; now, such a connection would be quite explicable at a time when these mixed marriages were still novel; many would be tempted to put away their own wives in order to be in fashion. The other abuses have to do with the temple service. That they existed in the days of Nehemiah we know; whether or not they existed before 458 we do not know, simply because we are without information concerning religious conditions in Jerusalem between 516 and 458. That Ezra discovered faithlessness on the part of the priests in some things is seen from Ezra x, 18ff.; that the other abuses might have crept in is quite possible. If in less than twenty years the returned exiles could grow as indifferent as Haggai and Zechariah picture their contemporaries, surely it is not hard to believe that during the fifty years or more following the building of the temple the people should again have come to disregard their religious obligations. May not the emphasis placed upon tithes and offerings in Neh. x, 32ff., imply that there existed a tendency to neglect these?

All that has been said thus far is not affected very seriously by the questions raised by Pentateuchal criticism, or by the question of the date of Ezra's return. On the whole, Malachi shows a more intimate acquaintance with the Book of Deuteronomy than with the so-called Priestly Code. If the traditional date of these portions of the Pentateuch is correct, that is, if Moses was the author, Malachi might have prophesied either before or after 458. If the dates claimed for these codes by modern scholars are correct, again either date is possible. Deuteronomy was certainly known before 458, and the one passage which is generally considered a clear reference to the Priestly Code (iii, 10; compare Num. xviii, 21ff.) might

be explained as marking a transition from the requirements of Deuteronomy (xiv, 22ff.) to those of the Priestly Code, a transition which, as Welch says, was made easier by the fact that, when the community was in the city, all the Levites were attached to the temple. If Malachi prophesied in 432 a reference to the Priestly Code, which was published certainly not later than 444, becomes quite natural, while the frequent allusions to Deuteronomy do not appear altogether strange, for to a prophet a prophetic presentation of the law would appeal more than the formal presentation of the Priestly Code.

Within recent times the return of Ezra has been dated after the first visit of Nehemiah in 445, by some very much later (see on Haggai, p. 550), and by some Ezra is considered not an historical person at all, but an "impersonation." But even if the truth of these claims could be established, which seems impossible with any sort of fair treatment of the biblical records, the date of Malachi would not be affected very seriously. Those who favor the later date would still assign his activity to 432; the others would say, instead of before 458, before 445, that is, about 450. A different date would have to be found if the contentions of Torrey and H. P. Smith could be established, that Nehemiah became governor in the fourth century under Artaxerxes II; but this view is improbable, as also the view of Winckler, to which reference is made in the introductory remarks to ii, 10-16.

The choice seems to lie between 432 and "before" 458. The present writer believes it impossible to settle the question finally. Malachi, like Ezra and Nehemiah, saw the need of the hour, and he, like them, sought to do his part toward bringing about a religious and moral reformation. Whether he was a few years earlier than they or their contemporary, is a question of secondary importance; that they coöperated openly may be doubted in view of the silence of the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah concerning such coöperation.

2. *Conditions of the Time.*—In 516 the temple was com-

pleted and dedicated, and in 458 Ezra came to Jerusalem. Concerning events connected with the rebuilding of the temple we receive information from the Books of Ezra, Haggai, Zechariah; concerning the return of Ezra, from the book bearing his name, a book whose substantial accuracy may still be maintained. Little is said anywhere in the Old Testament concerning the events between the two dates. From Ezra iv, 6ff., it would seem that during the reigns of Xerxes and Artaxerxes the Jews were accused of disloyalty, and that the second accusation resulted in the issuing of a decree forbidding the building of the city walls. However, a comparison between conditions in the days of Haggai and Zechariah and those in the days of Ezra may enable us to get a fairly clear idea of conditions in Judah during the intervening period. In addition, a little light is thrown upon these conditions by profane history.

(1) *Political Conditions.* During the interval which elapsed between the two events named the struggle between Persia and Greece and two revolts against Persian supremacy in Egypt took place. To what extent the Jews were affected by these movements we do not know. Herodotus declares that Syrians from Palestine, which might include Jews, served in the army of Xerxes; and it is not improbable that, especially in the wars with Egypt, they were called upon to furnish supplies for the Persian armies. On the whole, however, the attitude of the Persian court seems to have been friendly, and it is not unlikely that during the greater part of the period the Jews bore the yoke patiently. The two exceptions (Ezra iv, 6, and iv, 7ff.) may be traced, perhaps, to a revival of their Messianic hopes. Xerxes came upon the throne in 485; only a short time before this date Egypt had revolted; these events the Jews may have connected with the Messianic utterances of Haggai and Zechariah, the revolt in Egypt with the shaking of the nations promised in Haggai ii, 7. The second manifestation of unrest (Ezra iv, 7ff.) may have been connected with the second revolt in Egypt in 462, and may have been

caused by similar expectations. In 458 Ezra the scribe came from the east with rich presents from the king and from his fellow countrymen still in exile, and with extraordinary powers and privileges. He was accompanied by other loyal Jews, and after four months' journey they reached Jerusalem. After a brief period of activity Ezra disappears from view, and he is not heard of again until after Nehemiah had become civil governor in 445. After rebuilding the walls of the city Nehemiah undertook various social and religious reforms, in which he had the hearty support of Ezra, who reappeared as suddenly as some years previously he had disappeared. Some time later Nehemiah was recalled to the Persian court; when he returned to Jerusalem in 432 he found that the reforms of the past had been undone and that new evils were threatening the integrity of the community. Immediately he set about to rectify all these abuses, and with an account of the new reforms the narrative in the Book of Nehemiah closes.

2. *Moral and Religious Conditions.* Haggai and Zechariah labored earnestly to counteract the religious indifference which had grown up in the community during the years immediately following the return from Babylon (for the causes of this indifference see p. 549). They succeeded in arousing sufficient enthusiasm in the people to complete the temple; but as the causes of the indifference were not removed it is not strange that very soon the enthusiasm died out and the former indifference with its accompanying evils reappeared. The glorious expectations of the preëxilic prophets remained unrealized, and the new promises of Haggai and Zechariah were not fulfilled; the nations of the earth were not shaken (Hag. ii, 6, 7), and though the revolts in Egypt seemed to give promise of such shaking, in the end Persia remained supreme, while Judah remained governed by foreigners. The glory of Solomon's temple was not equaled, much less surpassed (Hag. ii, 9); taxes had to be paid and provision furnished for the Persian armies, which kept the people poor. Mal. iii, 9ff., implies that harvests had again failed as a result of drought and

plagues of locusts, which was in direct contradiction to the promise of Haggai (ii, 19).

In consequence of these various disappointments many in the nation began to ask, Where are the promises made to the fathers? What has become of the divine justice (ii, 17)? What of the divine interest in us? But if Jehovah does not care, why should we continue to waste our offerings and sacrifices in his service (iii, 7-12)? The disappointments were troublesome enough, but those in Judah who would retain faith in Jehovah were confronted by another perplexity. According to the popular conception piety should be rewarded invariably with prosperity, impiety with adversity; but there grew up in Jerusalem during the first half of the fifth century a class of godless nobles, who, by the use of unscrupulous means, accumulated wealth and lived in luxury and splendor (iii, 13ff.), and again the question arose, Where is the God of justice? Thus the people might look within or without, and on comparing present conditions with the promises of their prophets they would meet on every hand grave perplexities and problems. Small wonder that many, who perhaps had never attained a strong living faith, gave way to a temper of moroseness, skepticism, or even positive hostility to Jehovah.

The moral and religious conditions reflected in the Book of Malachi and in the portions of Ezra and Nehemiah dealing with the same period were the outgrowth of this religious indifference and skepticism. 1. The first glimpse which the book gives us (i, 6—ii, 9) is of the neglect of the temple worship by both priest and people. The priests performed their offices perfunctorily, and they showed by their actions that their heart was not in the work. Anything, they thought, was good enough for Jehovah, and so they offered the lame and the blind upon the altar (i, 7, 8). The maintenance of the temple service they considered too costly and irksome (i, 13). By their example and teaching they caused the people to stumble (ii, 8), until all alike failed to render to Jehovah the reverence and honor due to his name (i, 6). A similar

unwillingness to pay the proper religious dues is reflected in iii, 7-10, where the prophet condemns the people for defrauding Jehovah by the withholding of tithes and offerings. 2. A second result of the spirit of indifference and skepticism was the dying down of the zeal for the maintenance of Israel's distinct and separate character as the people of Jehovah. An evidence of this is seen in the wide prevalence of mixed marriages, that is, marriage alliances of Israelites with women of the surrounding heathen nations (ii, 11, 12; compare Ezra ix, 1ff.; x, 1ff.; Neh. xiii, 23ff.). Such alliances would break down the barriers between the Jewish community and the heathen nations and would open the door for the introduction of heathen practices and beliefs, which in the end might affect very seriously the purity of the Jehovah religion. In some cases these alliances seem to have been preceded by the putting away of a Jewish wife. This would have been impossible had the Jews been fully conscious of the unique relation of their nation to Jehovah; but with faith in Jehovah waning they would forget the duties they owed to one another as members of the same covenant nation (ii, 10), and lightly divorce their Jewish wives to make room for others. But even where divorce was not followed by an alliance with a foreign woman, the divorce itself implied a disregard of mutual obligations, and this in turn implied a waning faith in Jehovah. 3. The decline of religious fervor was followed by a moral decline. Sorcery, adultery, and false swearing were common; the laborer, the fatherless, and the widow were oppressed (iii, 5; compare Neh. v).

It must not be thought, however, that none escaped the skepticism and the corruption which followed. The very appearance of Malachi shows that there were in the community those who retained their hold on God and whose faith was made only stronger by the trials through which they passed (iii, 16). They had the same experiences as those who became skeptics and evil doers, but "instead of laying the blame on Jehovah . . . they recognized in Israel itself the cause of

the disappointment. It was Israel's faithlessness and indifference that now as of old hindered the accomplishment of the prophetic visions. The one hope of their fulfillment lay in a more strenuous and loyal observance on Israel's part of the moral conditions of Jehovah's covenant." Out of this group of religious zealots arose Malachi, determined to arouse, if possible, a new enthusiasm and a new faith in those who were rapidly drifting away from Jehovah and his law.

The Book of Malachi.

1. *General Remarks.*—The literary form of the Book of Malachi differs from that of the other prophetic books. Malachi does not attempt the rhetorical development of ideas which is so common with the earlier prophets; he prefers a dialectical and didactic style. He states briefly the truth which he desires to enforce; over against the simple proposition he sets an objection which he assumes might be raised. To this he replies, and in doing so he reasserts and expands the original statement. The reason for this change must be sought, not in the decadence of prophecy, but in a change in the method of prophetic teaching. Says G. A. Smith, "Just as with Zephaniah we saw prophecy passing into apocalypse, and with Habakkuk into the speculation of the schools of wisdom, so now in Malachi we perceive its transformation into the scholasticism of the rabbis." During the interval between Zechariah and Malachi, says the same author, "prophecy seems to have been driven from public life, from the sudden enforcement of truth in the face of the people to the more deliberate and ordered argument which marks the teacher who works in private." In the Book of Malachi, therefore, we have the beginning of the method of exposition which at a later time became universal in the synagogues and the schools of the Jews (compare i, 2ff., 6ff.; ii, 10, 14, 17; iii, 7, 8, 13).

Because of the peculiar style of the book it has been questioned whether the oracles contained in it were ever delivered orally. If they were, as seems quite probable, we have in

the book not a verbal reproduction but an epitome of the several addresses of the author, arranged so systematically that the book has the appearance of a single continuous discourse, whose tone is condemnatory almost throughout. The peculiar method of instruction referred to makes the style of Malachi appear more prosaic than that of the earlier prophets; only once or twice it rises to a higher level (iii, 1ff.; iv, 1-3). His diction, though on the whole pure, betrays some marks of his late date.

2. *Contents.*—The Book of Malachi falls naturally into three sections of unequal length (i, 6—ii, 9; ii, 10-16; ii, 17—iv, 3), with a prologue (i, 2-5) and an epilogue (iv, 4-6).

The prologue (i, 2-5) forms the basis of all subsequent utterances. The contemporaries of the prophet questioned the love of Jehovah, because the bright promises of the earlier prophets had remained unfulfilled. Malachi meets this criticism in his opening words, "I have loved you, saith Jehovah" (2). All they need to do to convince themselves of the reality of the divine love is to compare their own history with that of Edom. Jacob and Esau were brothers, but what a contrast between the fortunes of the descendants of the two! Israel, reëstablished in its own home and destined for a more glorious future; Edom, driven from its home and doomed to live in exile forever (3-5).

The first denunciation, i, 6—ii, 9, is directed principally, though not exclusively, against the priests. As their loving father and kind master, Jehovah has a right to expect of them gratitude and reverence, but they fail to give him his dues (6), as is clearly shown by the fact that they offer to Jehovah gifts which a human governor would reject with scorn (7, 8). Is it any wonder that Jehovah will not listen to their petitions (9)? It would be much better to close the temple and extinguish the altar fires than to continue this sort of service (10). The service rendered to him among the nations is preferable to that of the Jews, for it is pure and generous (11), while that of the latter is corrupt and heartless; the offerings

are small, the sacrificial animals diseased and worthless, and the little they do give they give grudgingly (12, 13). Cursed be everyone who dares thus to insult Jehovah (14).

If the priests fail to heed the warning and to render unto Jehovah the service acceptable to him, he will send upon them his curse, that they may understand his purpose to maintain the ancient covenant with Levi (ii, 1-4). According to this covenant Jehovah promised to Levi life and peace; in return Levi promised to fear Jehovah. This covenant was kept by both parties; Levi served God faithfully, and by his faithfulness turned many from iniquity (5, 6). Similar conduct is expected of all his priests (7), but how far short do they come of the ideal (8)! Therefore disgrace and contempt will be their portion (9).

In ii, 10-16, the prophet condemns the people's faithlessness to the ancient covenant with Jehovah. Jehovah is the father of all Israel, which implies that the individual Israelites are brothers and sisters, but they have disregarded the obligations placed upon them by these relations (10). In proof of the accusation the prophet calls attention to two widespread abuses: (1) mixed marriages, that is, marriages between Jews and women belonging to the surrounding heathenish or half-heathenish nations (11, 12); (2) the heartless putting away of Jewish wives by their husbands (13-15). Jehovah abominates such conduct, therefore they would better desist from it (16).

In ii, 17—iv, 3, the prophet denounces the spirit of indifference and skepticism which is the root of all the religious and moral corruption condemned in the rest of the book. The evil doers prosper while the pious suffer, hence the question is raised by many, Where is the God of justice (17)? To this Jehovah replies that he will no longer delay judgment; preceded by a messenger he will suddenly appear for judgment (iii, 1); his coming will prove terrible to all who have done evil, for he will come like a refiner's fire, to burn up all dross (2). The priests he will purify that they may offer

again sacrifice "in righteousness" (3, 4), and from the nation at large he will sweep away all forms of vice and wickedness (5).

Since the skeptics (ii, 17) doubted the interest of Jehovah in the affairs of the nation, they saw no reason why they should continue to offer sacrifice to him; this neglect the prophet condemns in iii, 6-12. First he asserts that the charge contained in ii, 17, is groundless; Jehovah has not changed, but he cannot manifest himself as in days gone by because their attitude toward him has undergone a change (6). They cry out for his return to them, but he can respond only if they return to him (7). When they inquire wherein they are to return, he replies, in being honest in the payment of their tithes and offerings (8). If they do this they will soon discover that Jehovah still lives and can bless them with abundant prosperity (9-12).

In iii, 13, the prophet returns to the apparent inequalities of life. The complaint is made that the wicked prosper while they that fear God are oppressed (13-15). The complaint is unwarranted, says the prophet, for Jehovah's watchful eye is over all, and though at present the lot of the pious may seem hard, Jehovah keeps a record of them all (16), and when he appears in his temple he will make a distinction between the righteous and the wicked (16-18). The wicked will be destroyed root and branch (iv, 1), but the righteous will be exalted forever (2, 3).

The book closes with an exhortation and a promise. The hearers and readers are urged to lay to heart the law of Moses, for only thus can they escape the terrors of the day of Jehovah (4). The promise of iii, 1, is repeated, that a messenger, here called Elijah, will come to prepare the way for the coming of Jehovah himself (5). The last verse (6) explains wherein the preparation consists: the messenger will attempt to convert the nation, so that the terror of the day of Jehovah may be averted. If he fails, nothing can save the sinners from destruction.

3. Outline.—

TITLE—THE AUTHOR AND THE SUBJECT OF THE PROPHECY...Chap. i, 1

I. THE PROLOGUE—JEHOVAH'S LOVE FOR ISRAEL.....i, 2-5
1. The divine love asserted.....i, 2
2. The divine love proved.....i, 3-5

II. CONDEMNATION OF ISRAEL'S NEGLECT OF THE SERVICE OF JEHOVAH.....i, 6—ii, 9
1. Rebuke of the faithless priests and people.....i, 6-14
(1) Worthlessness of the sacrifices offered to Jehovah.....i, 6-8
(2) Jehovah's displeasure with the present service.....i, 9, 10
(3) Contrast between the service rendered to Jehovah among the nations and that rendered by the Jews.....i, 11-13
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III. CONDEMNATION OF MIXED MARRIAGES AND OF DIVORCE....ii, 10-16
1. Disregard of the covenant obligations.....ii, 10
2. The illegitimate marriage alliances.....ii, 11, 12
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IV. CONDEMNATION OF RELIGIOUS INDIFFERENCE AND SKEPTICISM .....ii, 17—iv, 3
1. Jehovah's approach in judgment.....ii, 17—iii, 5
(1) Where is the God of justice?.....ii, 17
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(1) Jehovah's immutability—The people's fickleness.....iii, 6
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3. A new defense of Jehovah's justice.....iii, 13—iv, 3
(1) The complaint—The wicked prosper, the pious suffer.....iii, 13-15
(2) Separation of the pious from the wicked on the day of reckoning.....iii, 16-18
(3) Utter destruction of the wicked.....iv, 1
(4) Exaltation and glorification of the righteous, ...iv, 2, 3
V. Closing admonitions.....iv, 4-6
1. Exhortation to faithful observance of the law.....iv, 4
2. Elijah the messenger and his work of preparation, iv, 5, 6

4. *Teaching.*—The Book of Malachi has been aptly described as "Prophecy within the Law." On the one hand, it reaffirms the truths taught by the great preëxilic prophets, such as the fatherly love and care of Jehovah for Israel, the holiness and righteousness of Jehovah, the terrible judgment upon the wicked, and the exaltation of the righteous. On the other hand, unlike the earlier prophetic books, it places great stress upon the law as a disciplinary rule of life; its lax performance receives severe condemnation, and the final exhortation of the book is, "Remember ye the law of Moses, my servant."

In fairness to Malachi this second characteristic must not be overemphasized to the obscuring of the former. True, he shared with the other religious leaders of the postexilic period a high opinion of the law, but this is due not so much to lower religious conceptions as to the fact, which every careful student of Hebrew history in the days of Malachi must have noticed, that after all prophecy had failed to produce the permanent results for which the prophets had toiled so persistently. Generation after generation they had sought to create a pure and holy nation, but after the lapse of centuries the people appeared to be no nearer the ideal than at the beginning. Consequently the question must have arisen in many minds, whether the method of the prophets was the one best adapted to the needs of the time, whether the people could be trusted to apply the principles of the prophetic religion to the daily life, or whether it would not be better to lay down

definite rules and urge the people to observe these, and thus avoid the lapses of the past? The last question was answered in the affirmative, and the legalism of the postexilic period was born. However, in the beginning it was permeated by a spirit of intense moral earnestness; the exaggeration of the letter is a later development. Malachi was a prophet just as truly as were Isaiah and Jeremiah, but unlike these he emphasized the embodiment of the prophetic spirit and the prophetic principles in external law.

Though the principal points in Malachi's teaching have already been alluded to, a few of them deserve special mention: 1. The fatherhood of Jehovah. Jehovah has manifested a fatherly interest in Israel throughout the entire history of the nation (i, 2-5). This fact the prophet makes the basis of all his appeals. Because he is the loving father of the Jews, he has a right to claim their reverence and affection (i, 6); because he loves all alike, they should show brotherly love toward one another (ii, 10). But his love can manifest itself only toward the good and pious; the unrighteous, even of his own children, must perish (ii, 16; iii, 16—iv, 3). 2. Malachi emphasizes the justice and righteousness of Jehovah as strongly as did the stern Amos. And a righteous God demands a pure and righteous service of his worshipers. External forms of worship are an abomination to him, unless they are prompted by true devotion and accompanied by a holy and consistent life (i, 6—ii, 9). He would rather do without sacrifice and offerings than be compelled to receive them from those who neglect the weightier matters (i, 10). He desires the payment of tithes, but only as the practical expression of a loving faith in him (iii, 7, 8). Apparent inequalities in life do not militate against the divine righteousness, for in due time Jehovah will prove himself a righteous judge by rewarding all according to their deeds (iii, 16—iv, 3). 3. The brotherhood of man is taught in the book of Malachi not in the broad New Testament sense, but only as applying to relations within the Jewish community. The individual Jews are related to one

another as brothers and sisters, and this relation should determine their treatment of one another. 4. Mixed marriages and divorce receive the severest condemnation, because (1) they threatened to corrupt the religion of Jehovah; (2) they were sins against the principle of brotherhood. 5. The significance of i, 11, has been overestimated. It would, indeed, be remarkable to find an Old Testament prophet broad-minded enough to teach that the worship of heathen nations offered to different deities was in reality worship of Jehovah under various forms; but that is not the thought of the passage (see on i, 11). And yet the recognition by a Jew that any worship rendered to Jehovah among the nations was acceptable to him was a long step forward toward the teaching of Jesus in John iv, 21ff. 6. The Messianic teaching of Malachi is very simple. The establishment of the kingdom of God will be preceded by the day of Jehovah, a day of sifting on which Jehovah will appear to separate the righteous from the wicked, and a day of terror on which he will execute judgment upon the wicked (iii, 1-5; iii, 16—iv, 3). After the crisis the pious will enter upon a life of permanent prosperity and felicity. The Messianic king is not mentioned; Jehovah himself will interfere on behalf of his people. Malachi introduces the person of a messenger, Elijah the prophet, who will be sent to prepare the way for the coming of the judge (iii, 1; iv, 5, 6).

MALACHI.

CHAPTER I.

THE burden of the word of the LORD to Israel [1]by Malachi.

[1] Heb. *by the hand of Malachi.*

CHAPTER I.

Verse 1 contains the title, which is similar to that in Zech. xii, 1 (compare also the common translation of ix, 1, but see comment there). **Burden**—See on Nah. i, 1. **Word of Jehovah**—See on Hos. i, 1. **Israel**—Not in the narrow sense, the northern kingdom (Amos i, 1), but the entire postexilic community, whether descendants of the northern tribes or of Judah. **By Malachi**—Literally, *by the hand of Malachi* (compare Hag. i, 1). See Introduction, p. 687.

JEHOVAH'S LOVE OF ISRAEL, 2-5.

The contents of these verses form the basis of all subsequent appeals, for they emphasize the fatherly love of Jehovah toward the Hebrews, which entitles him to their gratitude and devotion. The prophet points out that they do not have to go far to find proofs of the divine love. Jacob and Esau were brothers, hence one would naturally expect their descendants to be treated alike by God; but what contrast between the fortunes of the two! Israel, after many ups and downs, restored to its old home, there to remain forever; the territory of Edom doomed to be a perpetual desolation. There can be but one reason for all this—Jehovah loved Jacob, but Esau he hated. This love of Jehovah for Israel, the prophet thinks, should be the motive and model for Israel's attitude toward him.

2, 3. **I have loved you**—In his emphasis of the divine love which manifested itself throughout the entire history of Israel Malachi resembles Hosea (see p. 30). **Yet ye say**—These words give the first illustration of the dialectical and didactic character of the literary style of Malachi (compare i, 6, 7; ii, 17; iii, 13, 14). The author states a simple thesis, in this case "I have loved you." Over against it he sets an objection which may have been raised at some previous time, or which he suspects may be in the mind of some one. This gives to him an opportunity to elaborate and prove the truth which in the beginning he simply affirmed. **Wherein hast thou loved us?**—These words express the objection. During the postexilic period doubts of this sort arose in the minds of many Jews, who were disappointed because the bright visions of the preëxilic prophets were not realized; and this skepticism increased when it was seen that the expectations of Haggai and Zechariah also were not being fulfilled (see pp. 553f. and pp. 695). The prophet introduces his answer by another question. **Was not Esau Jacob's brother?**—The two earliest of the Minor Prophets, Amos (i, 11) and Hosea (xii, 3), call attention to this relationship. As the succeeding verses show, the prophet is thinking primarily of the descendants of the two, but he traces the history back to the ancestors, because in their lives the difference in the attitude of Jehovah could already be seen. Everything else being equal, twin brothers might be expected to have similar experiences in life, and their descendants might be expected

2 [a]I have loved you, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? *Was* not Esau Jacob's

[a] Deut. 7. 8; 10. 15.

brother? saith the LORD: yet [b]I loved Jacob, 3 And I hated Esau, and [c]laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the

[b] Rom. 9. 13.—[c] Jer. 49. 18; Ezek. 35. 3, 4, 7, 9, 14, 15; Obad. 10, etc.

to enjoy similar fortunes. In the case of these two a vast difference could be seen. **Yet**—Though they were twin brothers. **I loved Jacob, . . . hated Esau**—Keil is right in insisting that the meaning of these words "must not be weakened down into loving more and loving less . . . To hate is the opposite of love. And this meaning must be retained here." At the same time the meaning must not be pressed too literally. The expression is an anthropomorphism like *repent* (see on Joel ii, 13) and *swear* (Amos iv, 2), used by the prophet to present to his listeners or readers an idea in a form which they could easily understand. The great mass of Jews considered prosperity an infallible proof of the divine love and favor, adversity of the divine hatred. But if they explained their own present prosperity as an evidence of the divine favor, they must explain the affliction of Esau as an evidence of the divine wrath. The prophet says nothing concerning the ground of distinction, for to judge the motive was outside of his sphere. So far as his words are concerned Jehovah might have had good grounds for his action or he might have been arbitrary; but when we bear in mind the date of Malachi we must consider it very probable, to say the least, that he possessed a sufficiently lofty conception of the character of Jehovah to exclude arbitrariness (compare verse 4). R. V. renders the rest of verse 3, "and made his mountains a desolation, and gave his heritage to the jackals of the wilderness." These words and verse 4 supply the proof of the divine hatred against Edom, and by implication the divine love for the Jews. **Mountains**—The territory of Edom was rocky and mountainous (see on Amos i, 11; Obad. 3, 4), therefore the whole country might be called *mountain*. **Heritage**—Denotes the territory of the Edomites as a possession inherited from their ancestors and from their god (compare Judg. xi, 23, 24). **For the dragons of the wilderness**—R. V., "to the jackals." The meaning of the Hebrew word translated *dragon* or *jackal* is not quite certain, since it occurs nowhere else in this form. It is related to a word ordinarily translated *sea-monster* (compare Gen. i, 21), which is used in an oracle against Edom in Isa. xxxiv, 13, where it is translated *jackals*. The idea is that Edom has been wasted so completely that now only beasts of the desert live there. LXX. and Peshitto read, "into dwellings of the wilderness." A similar expression, to which Stade proposes to change the phrase in this verse, "pastures of the wilderness," occurs in Jer. ix, 10; but here it would be no improvement, and unless a more serious corruption is assumed the translation of R. V. is preferable. If an emendation is thought necessary, that suggested by Marti is the most satisfactory, "and made his heritage to a wilderness."

When the devastation of Edom took place is not stated; however, verse 4 suggests that it occurred quite recently, for at the time of the utterance the damage had not yet been repaired, nor had there been made any attempt in that direction. In all probability Malachi has in mind the expulsion of the Edomites from their territory by the Nabatean Arabs, which began during the period of the exile and reached its culmination during the early part of the fifth century B.C. (compare Amos i, 11; Joel iii, 20; Obad. 1-15).

But, some one might say, the Israelites also passed through a period of oppression and homelessness, and yet they were restored to their old home, and prosperity is returning; may not the Edomites enjoy a similar restoration? This objection is met in verse 4 by the declaration that the desola-

wilderness. 4 Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the LORD of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and, The people against whom the LORD hath indignation for ever. 5 And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, [d]The LORD will be magnified [2] [3]from the border of Israel.

[d] Psa. 35. 27.

[2] Or, *upon.*—[3] Heb. *from upon.*

tion of Edom will continue forever, that every attempt to restore its fortunes will prove futile. **We are impoverished**—R. V., "beaten down." This the Edomites admit, but they are not disheartened, for they expect to rebuild the waste places. **We will return and build**—If the calamity alluded to is the expulsion of the Edomites from their home land (see on verse 3), this translation should be retained. They expect to recover the territory, and then to rebuild the desolate places. The Hebrew idiom also permits the translation "we will build again," which does not imply an expulsion or a hope of return. Jehovah will prevent the execution of their plans (compare Isa. ix, 8-10), for his hatred against Edom will continue, and he will keep it in ruins forever. **I will throw down**—Bring to naught all attempts of restoration. **They shall call**—Better, R. V., "men shall call." The subject is indefinite. Whoever observes the vain struggle will pass the judgment expressed in the rest of the verse. **The border of wickedness, . . . The people against whom Jehovah hath indignation**—The continued desolation and the failure of every attempt to rebuild the waste places would constitute conclusive evidence that the wrath of Jehovah is resting upon Edom, but that presupposed, according to popular belief, the commission of some great crime by the Edomites. If *they* or *men* include people outside of the Jewish community the expression "*Jehovah* hath indignation" implies that Malachi assumes the recognition of Jehovah as the true God by people other than the Jews (compare i, 11). **Forever**—See on Joel iii, 20.

5. When the Jews see with their own eyes the fulfillment of these threats upon Edom they will be convinced of the divine majesty and love. **Your eyes shall see**—They need not depend upon hearsay, for with their own eyes will they witness the humiliation of Edom. **Ye shall say**—Convinced by the fulfillment of the threats. **Jehovah will be magnified from the border of Israel**—R. V., "Jehovah be magnified beyond the border of Israel"; margin R. V., "Jehovah is great beyond the border of Israel." Of these three translations the last is the best. The treatment accorded to the Edomites will prove to the Jews that Jehovah is supreme even over the nations outside of Israel. However, the force of the preposition is not quite clear; literally it is "from upon," which may be used in the sense of *above* or *over*, "Jehovah is great over the borders of Israel," that is, the contrast between the fortunes of Edom and those of Israel is proof that Jehovah's great powers are exercised especially on behalf of the Jews —in other words, that he loves them. This thought would seem to fit even better into the context.

Israel's Neglect of Jehovah, i, 6—ii, 9.

Throughout the entire history of Israel Jehovah showed himself a loving father and kind master; this would seem to entitle him to the people's gratitude and reverence, but they fail to give him his dues (6), as is clearly shown by the fact that they offer to Jehovah gifts which a human governor would reject with scorn (7, 8). No wonder that Jehovah refuses to listen to their prayers (9). It would be far better to close the temple and ex-

6 A son [e]honoreth *his* father, and a servant his master: [f]if then I *be* a father, where *is* mine honor? and if I *be* a master, where *is* my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. [g]And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name? 7 [4]Ye offer [h]polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee?

[e] Exod. 20. 12.—[f] Luke 6. 46.—[g] Chaps. 2. 14, 17; 3. 7, 8,13.

[4] Or, *Bring unto*, etc.—[h] Deut. 15. 21.

tinguish the altar fires than to continue this sort of service (10). The service rendered to Jehovah among the nations is preferable to that of the Jews, for it is pure and generous, while that of the Jews is corrupt and heartless; the offerings are small, the sacrificial animals diseased and worthless, and the little they do give they give grudgingly (11-13). Cursed be everyone who dares to insult Jehovah in this manner (14). If the priests do not heed the warning and render unto Jehovah the service acceptable to him he will send his curse upon them, that they may understand his purpose to maintain the ancient covenant with Levi (ii, 1-4). According to this covenant Jehovah promised to Levi life and peace, while Levi promised to fear Jehovah. Both parties kept the covenant faithfully; Levi served God, and by his faithfulness turned many to righteousness (5, 6). Similar conduct is expected of all his priests (7), but how far short of the ideal do they come (8)! Therefore disgrace and contempt will be their portion (9).

Rebuke of the faithless priests and people, 6-14.

6. The prophet starts from a generally recognized truth. **Son . . . servant** Every one would admit that a son owes loving reverence to his father or that a servant should regard his master with respect and honor. But though Jehovah was the father of Israel (Exod. iv, 22; Hos. xi, 1; Jer. xxxi, 9) and his master, Israel being his servant (Isa. xli, 8; xlii, 1; xliv, 1), the nation has failed to render to him that which rightfully belongs to him. **Fear**—Better, *reverence* (compare Isa. viii, 13). **O priests**—Though the priests are addressed as the "soul of the national life," the reproof applies with equal force to the whole people. **Despise my name**—See on Amos ii, 7; Mic. iv, 5. In the place of honor and reverence they bestow upon Jehovah insult and shame. **Wherein have we despised?**—The prophet knows that this question might be raised by those who were accustomed to pass through the forms of religion but were unable to enter into the spirit of it (see on verse 2); hence he immediately proceeds to answer it.

7, 8. The insult consists in the presentation upon Jehovah's altar of gifts and sacrifices which they would not dare to offer to an earthly ruler. **Ye offer**—The priests. They should have refused to accept improper offerings from the worshipers (Lev. xxii, 17-25), and should have instructed them in their duties (ii, 7), but they did not guard the interests of Jehovah. **Bread**—Or, *food.* Here in the more specific sense of food of the Deity, that is, sacrifice, which is called *bread of God* (Lev. xxi, 6, 8; Ezek. xliv, 7). **Polluted**—Or, *unclean.* The sacrifice is so called because (1) it was offered in a spirit of hypocrisy; (2) the animals presented were blemished and therefore unfit for sacrifice (verses 8, 12; compare Lev. xxii, 17-25). This accusation also is resented. **Wherein have we polluted thee?**—The idea underlying the question is that to touch or eat anything unclean makes a person unclean (compare Ezek. xiii, 19; Hag. ii, 13). The question does not follow naturally upon the preceding accusation, which already supplies an answer to it, nor is the succeeding clause a suitable answer. LXX. gives a preferable reading, "Wherewith have we polluted *it*?" that is, the bread which the prophet has called polluted. To which the prophet replies, By saying

In that ye say, [i]The table of the LORD *is* contemptible. 8 And [k]if ye offer the blind [5]for sacrifice, *is it* not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, *is it* not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or [l]accept thy person? saith the LORD of hosts. 9 And now, I pray you, beseech [6]God that he will be gracious unto us: [m]this hath been [7]by your means: will he regard your persons? saith the LORD of hosts. 10 Who *is there* even among you that would shut

[i] Verse 12; Ezek. 41. 22.——[k] Verse 14; Lev. 22. 22; Deut. 15. 21.——[5] Heb. *to sacrifice.*

[l] Job. 42. 8.——[6] Heb. *the face of God.*——[m] Hos. 13. 9.——[7] Heb. *from your hand.*

that the table of Jehovah is contemptible. This they have said not in words but by the actions described in verse 8. **Table**—As sacrifice is called food, so the altar may be called a table. **Contemptible**—In the sense that anything is good enough for it.

In 8a the prophet points out how they show their contempt for the altar and for Jehovah. **If**—Better, R. V., "when." **Ye offer the blind**—Therefore unfit for sacrifice (Lev. xxii, 22). **Is it not evil?**—Better, R. V., "it is no evil!" The words are used ironically; according to their own notions it is no evil. **Lame and sick**—Also unfit for sacrifice (Lev. xxii, 20-25; Deut. xv, 21). Would they dare to present such gifts to an earthly governor? But if not, how can they justify themselves for presenting them to one greater than he? **Offer**—R. V., "Present," as a gift. The sacrifices are gifts presented to Jehovah. **Thy governor**—At this time probably a Persian, whose favor might be bought; but he would refuse to have anything to do with a present of little or no value, and with the person presenting such gift.

9. They know well enough that the favor of an earthly governor cannot be secured in this way; let them now see if Jehovah is pleased with such things. **Beseech God**—Literally, *the face of God* (compare Zech. vii, 2). Not a call to repentance, but an ironical challenge to supplicate Jehovah with gifts and prayers. In other great crises he heard intercessory prayer (Gen. xviii, 22ff.; Exod. xxxii, 11). **This hath been by your means**—Literally, *from your hands was this;* that is, the offering of unclean animals. These words interrupt the thought; the question following is the real continuation of the ironical exhortation; therefore many commentators omit them as a later gloss. As they stand now, they can serve only to emphasize the illegitimacy and hypocrisy of their conduct. What can they expect under these circumstances? **Will he regard your persons?**—R. V., "accept any of your persons?" margin, "accept any because of you?" The Hebrew is ambiguous, but in view of the exhortation, which seems to imply intercessory prayer, the marginal translation is to be preferred. The priests were mediators between Jehovah and the people, they offered sacrifice as servants of Jehovah and of the people, to secure the divine favor for the latter; but since they have proved faithless their service is no longer acceptable, they can no longer secure the favor of Jehovah for the people. **Jehovah of hosts**—See on Hos. xii, 5.

10. The translators of A. V. misunderstood the force of 10a. R. V. expresses the thought much more clearly, though in some respects it is less literal than A. V.: "Oh that there were one among you that would shut the doors, that ye might not kindle fire on mine altar in vain!" The sense of the passage is: It were better that the doors of the temple be closed, and that sacrifices would cease entirely, than that the present condition be continued. **Oh that there were one** (R. V.)—Literally, *Who is there even among you?* This question has the force of a wish (compare 2 Sam. xv, 4; Psa. iv, 6): Is there not even one among you?—Would that

the doors *for nought?* [n]neither do ye kindle *fire* on mine altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the LORD of hosts, [o]neither will I accept an offering at your hand. **11** For [p]from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name *shall be* great [q]among the Gentiles; [r]and in every place [s]incense *shall be* offered unto my name, and a pure offering: [t]for my name *shall be* great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts.

[n] 1 Cor. 9. 13.—[o] Isa. 1. 11; Jer. 6. 20; Amos 5. 21.—[p] Psa. 113. 3; Isa. 59. 19.

[q] Isa. 60. 3, 5.—[r] John 4. 21, 23; 1 Tim. 2. 8.—[s] Rev. 8. 3.—[t] Isa. 66. 19, 20.

some one were among you (G.-K., 151a)! **Shut the doors**—Of the temple, so that all worshipers will be excluded, and in consequence all sacrifices will cease. **Kindle fire on mine altar**—Literally, *light my altar*, with sacrificial fires (Isa. xxvii, 11; l, 11). **In vain** (R. V.)—To no purpose, for it does not secure for them the divine favor (verse 9). **I have no pleasure in you**—Primarily the priests, but also the worshipers in general, because they leave undone the things pleasing to him, and for the things which they do he does not care (compare Isa. i, 10-17; Amos v, 21-24). **An offering**—The word is ordinarily used to denote the meal offering (see on Joel i, 9); here it stands for sacrifice or offering of every sort (compare Zeph. iii, 10).

11. Jehovah *cannot* accept impure sacrifices from his own people, when less favored nations offer to him sacrifices that are pure. **Rising of the sun . . . going down**—The farthest ends of the earth (compare Zech. viii, 7; Psa. ciii, 12). **My name shall be great**—LXX., "glorified," which is to be preferred here, since "great" is found later in the verse, where it is in its proper place. The name of Jehovah is glorified and sacrifice is offered because the name of Jehovah is great. To glorify the name of Jehovah is to render proper worship and honor to him. **Gentiles . . . heathen**—The same word in Hebrew in both cases. It would be better to translate "nations," that is, the nations other than the Jews. **In every place**—Not only "in every sacred place," but "everywhere" (Zeph. ii, 11); to be understood literally, but in the loose sense in which the English word is sometimes used; Schultz, "in every clime." **Incense**—Not to be limited to incense proper; like "offerings" in verse 10 and again here, the term includes sacrifices and offerings of every sort (compare Amos iv, 5). **Offering**—Practically identical in meaning with "incense," with which it stands in apposition: "incense is offered, even a pure offering." **Pure**—The emphasis rests upon this word. In contrast to the "polluted bread" offered by the Jews (verses 7, 8) the nations offer sacrifice that is faultless. Some recent commentators abbreviate the present Hebrew text, which is a little awkward, and read simply, "in every place a pure offering is offered unto my name." The last clause explains why Jehovah is thus honored among the nations. **My name shall be great**—For the significance of *name of Jehovah* see on Amos ii, 7; Mic. iv, 5. The words used here are equivalent to "I in my manifestations am great." What the prophet means to say is that the wonderful things which Jehovah has done (or will do) have been (or will be) so great and powerful that he is (or will be) recognized as the true God even among other nations, and as a result is receiving (or will receive) homage from them.

Verse 11 has been and still is the subject of much discussion. The chief point of controversy is the question whether the verse points to the prophet's present or future. The Hebrew, apart from the context, permits either translation. LXX. refers it to the present, so also a few of the early church fathers; A. V., A. R. V., and margin of English R. V. refer it to the future; English R. V. and margin A. R. V., to the present. Interpreted of the present, the translation is, "For

from the rising of the sun even to the going down of the same my name is great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense is offered unto my name, even a pure offering: for my name is great among the Gentiles, saith Jehovah of hosts." Until quite recently commentators were about equally divided, but the most recent writers are inclined toward interpreting the words of the present; and this seems to be the most natural interpretation in the light of the context, because (1) both verse 10 and verse 12 refer to the present, and in verse 12 at least the same grammatical construction is used as in verse 11; (2) the prophet's argument requires this interpretation. That it is the *present* conduct of the Jews that he condemns is quite evident (verse 12), but in order to make the contrast effective he must place over against the *present* conduct of the Jews the *present* conduct of the nations.

But granting that verse 11 refers to the prophet's present, what does it mean? Some have thought that the prophet has in mind the worship rendered by Jewish proselytes among the nations, or by Jews scattered among the nations. Neither interpretation is quite satisfactory, because (1) the number of proselytes technically so called must have been very small during the first half of the fifth century B.C., and the dispersion had not proceeded very far at that time. (2) Neither does justice to the prophet's language, which seems to imply that members of foreign nations rendered in some way acceptable service to Jehovah. Against this interpretation that the prophet is thinking of foreigners, several objections have been raised: (1) "It would be unheard of that a prophet who holds such strict views of the law, and abominates foreign wives on account of their heathen deities as a pollution of the holy nation (ii, 11, 12), would apply the predicate *pure* to heathen offerings." (2) This view "contradicts the definite assertion that the knowledge of the *name* of Jehovah forms the postulate of such service." (3) The teaching of the New Testament is said to be explicit: "The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God" (1 Cor. x, 20).

A New Testament statement cannot be used to prove what an Old Testament writer may or may not have written, for it is universally admitted that the coming of Jesus has resulted in religious thinking along new lines. But even the New Testament permits the interpretation suggested. Though Rom. i, 19, 20, and Acts xvii, 23ff., do not express the identical thought, they move in the direction of the statement in Malachi when they assert that even nations other than Jews may do things acceptable to God.

The force or weakness of the second objection depends upon the interpretation of the expression *name of Jehovah*. As stated in other connections, it means practically *Jehovah in manifestation* (see on Amos ii, 7; Mic. iv, 5). In the interpretation of the clause "my name is great among the nations" we may readily follow Keil, who, however, interprets verse 11 of the future. "And the name of God," says he, "is only great among the Gentiles when Jehovah has proved himself to them a great God, so that they have discerned the greatness of the living God from his marvelous works and thus have learned to fear him." That this will happen at some future time, and in some cases in the immediate future from the standpoint of the speakers, is taught in several passages in the Old Testament (for example, Zeph. ii, 11; Exod. xv, 14–16; Psa. xlvi, 9–11), but the Old Testament goes beyond this. There are several passages in the Old Testament which assert with an emphasis not surpassed in verse 11 that the nations *have already* "discerned the greatness of the living God from his marvelous works" and, in some cases at least, have "learned to fear him"; for example, Psa. cxxvi, 2, which is

dated by many in the period of Malachi's activity; the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, especially the decrees ascribed to the Persian kings, which deal with the period beginning with the return in 537 and end, generally speaking, with the second visit of Nehemiah, about 432, in the latter part of which period falls the activity of our prophet; also the Book of Daniel. The testimony of these passages is of value, whatever the date of the composition of the books, for there can be no doubt that from the very beginning the pious Jews attributed the permission to return from Babylon to the direct interference of Jehovah, a view which implies the belief in a recognition on the part of the Persian rulers of the greatness and supremacy of Jehovah (compare also Isa. xi, 12; xlix, 22). It is seen, then, that the second and the third objections find no support in Scripture.

There remains the first objection, that the idea of Malachi calling the heathen offerings *pure* is absurd and "unheard of." Is this statement true? (1) A recognition of the presence of Jehovah worship among the nations does not necessarily exclude opposition to marriage alliances with those who have not yet come to serve Jehovah properly. In Hebrew as in English the term *everywhere* does not include every individual or community, or even every nation. The prophet says "*among* the nations." (2) The opposition to mixed marriages, like the hostility toward the Samaritans in the days of Jesus, was based upon racial as well as upon religious feelings; therefore the prophet might recognize the presence of true worship among the surrounding nations and yet, because of this racial prejudice, be opposed to alliances with these very nations. It would not be difficult to find analogies even in the twentieth century A.D. (3) With few exceptions the development of the religious thought of Israel, at least from the eighth century onward, proceeded in the direction of the statement of Malachi. Amos recognized that the nations possessed a certain amount of moral and religious light, and he condemned them for not living up to it (i, 3–ii, 3; compare iii, 9, 10); Isaiah condemned the Assyrians for disregarding the commission of Jehovah (x, 5–7); but all this implies the *possibility* of rendering acceptable service to Jehovah. Aside from these implications the statements in later books (for example, Dan. iv, 34ff.; vi, 25ff.; compare Jonah i, 14-16) must not be overlooked. The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah also imply the belief in a recognition of Jehovah as the true God by the Persian kings and a desire to serve him in a proper manner. These allusions, though not expressing the thought exactly as it is expressed in verse 11, certainly make it possible to think of Malachi as believing that in his days an acceptable worship was rendered to Jehovah among the nations of the earth. (4) Sacrificial terms came to be used in Israel in a metaphorical sense of acts and expressions of devotion other than the literal offering of sacrifice (Psa. li, 17). The terms of verse 11 might be understood in this wider sense, though in addressing the Jews the prophet would use the same terms primarily in a literal sense. If so, the thought of verse 11 would be that people in every clime, even without the special revelation granted to the Jews, had come to recognize Jehovah as the true God as a result of his mighty works for Israel, and that at the time of the prophet they were rendering to him a purer service than the Jews, whom alone Jehovah had known among all the families of the earth (Amos iii, 2).

This does not mean, however, that the prophet recognized the presence of monotheism in the heathen religions, or that he regarded all the sacrifices that were offered to different deities as offered in reality, though perhaps unconsciously, to the one true God. The true view, it seems to the present writer, is expressed by

12 But ye have profaned it, in that ye say, [u]The table of the LORD *is* polluted; and the fruit thereof, *even* his meat, *is* contemptible. 13 Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness *is it!* [s]and ye have snuffed at it,

[u] Verse 7.

[s] Or, *whereas ye might have blown it away.*

Schultz in these words: "The prophet is pointing out, in contrast to the selfishness and petty avarice of the inhabitants of the Holy Land in regard to sacrifices, that far more valuable sacrifices are being offered all round about to the Great God who is proving himself more and more the God of the nations." Though, as stated above, we cannot speak here of proselytes in the technical sense of that term, the observation by the Jews of this turning to Jehovah among the nations would create and encourage a spirit of proselyting.

Verse 12 is a repetition of the rebuke in verse 7. In sharp contrast to the honor which Jehovah receives among the nations stand the contempt and insult he suffers from his own people. **But ye**—Who have enjoyed special privileges and advantages. **Have profaned it**—That is, the name of Jehovah (see on Amos ii, 7; Mic. iv, 5). Better, R. V., "ye profane it," continually. The same idea is expressed by *despise* (verse 6) and *pollute* (verse 7). The rest of verse 12 indicates how they profane the name of Jehovah. **In that ye say**—By their actions more than by their words. **The table of Jehovah is polluted**—Literally, *the table of Jehovah, polluted is it. Polluted* here is identical in meaning with *contemptible* in verse 7. They consider anything good enough for the table, that is, for the altar of Jehovah. **The fruit thereof, even his meat, is contemptible**—Literally, *the fruit thereof, contemptible is its eating. Fruit* is that which is laid upon the altar, the sacrifice or offering. The clause, when interpreted naturally, expresses the thought that the portion of the sacrifices belonging to the priests is not considered good enough to serve them as food and is therefore despised. If the sacrificial animals were as poor and diseased as the prophet points out, such thought does not appear strange; and yet some take exception to this interpretation on the ground that "If the flesh . . . had been too bad for food in their estimation, they would not have admitted such animals or offered them in sacrifice." Those who take this latter view consider "his eating" equivalent to *its meat* or *food* (R. V.), in apposition to "the fruit thereof." *Its food* would then be the sacrifices placed upon the altar, which would be the food of Jehovah (verse 7), therefore A. V. "*his* meat." The Hebrew does not favor this interpretation, and if the present text is correct the first view is preferable. It is not impossible, however, that the word translated *his fruit*—a peculiar designation for sacrifice—has arisen through dittography, and that the original read simply "and contemptible is his food," that is, the food of Jehovah (see on verse 7). If the word is omitted the thought of the two clauses of verse 12 becomes practically identical. Altar and sacrifice they esteem lightly, and they consider anything good enough to be offered to Jehovah.

Verse 13 continues the thought of verse 12. Their faithlessness and corruption is seen in their attitude toward the entire sacrificial service. The tenses should be translated, with R. V., as present tenses, for the prophet condemns present sacrifices. **What a weariness is it!**—Not the eating of their portion of the sacrificial meat, but the priestly office and the service at the sanctuary. It they consider a trouble and a burden instead of an honor and a privilege, as they should. **Ye have snuffed at it**—At the service or table of Jehovah. An expression of contempt. Here is found one of the *emendations of the scribes* (see on Hab. i, 12); and following the Masoretic suggestion that *at*

saith the LORD of hosts; and ye brought *that which was* torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: [x]should I accept this of your hand? saith the LORD. **14** But cursed *be* [y]the deceiver,

[x] Lev. 22. 20, etc.—[y] Verse 8.

[9]which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for [z]I *am* a great King, saith the LORD of hosts, and my name *is* dreadful among the heathen.

[9] Or, *in whose flock is.*—[z] Psa. 47. 2; 1 Tim. 6. 15.

it is a change from an original *at me,* some commentators read "ye have snuffed at me," but the thought remains essentially the same. The contempt finds expression in the offering of unfit animals as sacrifices. **Torn**—Better, R. V., "taken by violence"; that is, something stolen. They were too selfish to give of their own (compare 2 Sam. xii, 1ff.), and when they did give of their own they gave only what was of no use to them. An additional thought may be implied, namely, that by giving stolen goods to Jehovah they would make him a participant in the crime, and thus make it impossible for him to punish them. Some scholars, following verse 8, read "blind." **Lame, . . . sick**—See on verse 8. The rebuke closes with a question similar to the one in verse 8. **Should I accept this of your hand?**—Simply because you are priests. He cannot do this. Sacrifice of this sort is an abomination to him (compare Amos v, 21–24; Isa. i, 10–15).

14. To the specific condemnation of the priests is added a curse upon all Israelites whose worship is insincere. **The deceiver**—One who seeks to deceive Jehovah in the manner described in the succeeding clauses. Keil sees here two kinds of deception: (1) when according to the law a male animal should have been sacrificed, and the person offering the sacrifice substituted a female, that is, one of less value, under the pretense that he did not have a male; (2) when one made a vow that demanded a perfect sacrifice, but offered one that was faulty and therefore unfit. To get this distinction from the present text requires considerable stretching of the Hebrew as well as of the imagination. Was there any occasion on which a diseased animal could be vowed? It is better, therefore, to understand the words of only one kind of deception. The thought becomes clearer if, following LXX., the pronominal suffix is added to the verb *voweth,* "who hath in his flock a male and voweth *it,* and sacrificeth unto the Lord a blemished thing." **Voweth**—Only *perfect* animals could be offered in fulfillment of a vow (Lev. xxii, 21). **A corrupt thing**—R. V., "blemished." Instead of the perfect animal, which, though vowed, he retains in the flock. Such hypocrisy the great and terrible God of the universe cannot endure (compare Isa. i, 13). **A great King**—Over all the earth. As such he has the right to demand the best. **My name**—See on verse 6, and references there. **Is dreadful among the heathen**—R. V., "terrible among the Gentiles" (see on Zeph. ii, 11); but here the word seems to be used rather in the sense of "is feared"—held in reverence. Jehovah who is reverenced even among the nations (verse 11), cannot, in justice to himself and to the nations, permit himself to be treated with contempt by his own people.

CHAPTER II.

A curse pronounced upon the faithless priests, 1–9.

The condemnation of priests and people in i, 6–14, is followed by the announcement of a curse upon the priests, who have proved disloyal to Jehovah and to their high calling.

Verse 1 is introductory, announcing to the priests that the succeeding oracle is intended in a special manner for them. The order of the words in the original makes the announcement

CHAPTER II.

AND now, O ye priests, this commandment *is* for you. 2 [a]If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay *it* to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the LORD of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay *it* to heart. 3 Behold,

[a] Lev. 26. 14, etc.; Deut. 28. 15, etc.

more emphatic: "And now, this commandment is for you, O priests." **And now**—Your guilt having been established. **O ye priests**—The message is addressed directly to the priests. **This commandment**—Includes the entire message contained in verses 2–9. No command of any sort is found in these verses, not even an exhortation to repentance, though such exhortation is implied in verse 2; hence the word cannot be understood in the narrow sense of commandment, but as meaning purpose or decree. The divine decree, shown by the succeeding verses to be one of destruction, is for the priests.

The case is put very clearly in verse 2. Either they must give glory to the name of Jehovah or destruction will be their portion. **If ye will not hear**—That is, pay attention to the words of warning already spoken or to any that may yet be spoken. **Lay to heart**—The same message of warning; so as to profit by it. **Give glory unto my name**—As the result of laying the message to heart. How they may give glory to the name of Jehovah may be seen from i, 6–14, by rendering to him the service which is his due. If they fail to reform, and reform quickly, disaster will overtake them. **I will even send a curse**—R. V., "then will I send *the* curse." The article is emphatic; the curse threatened for such disobedience (compare Deut. xxvii, 15–26; xxviii, 15ff.). **I will curse your blessings**—The *blessings* are not those "pronounced by the priests upon the people by virtue of their office," which God will make ineffective or turn into the very opposite; nor are they the priestly income, the sacrificial portions belonging to the priests; but, in a more general sense, the blessings, favors, and privileges bestowed upon their order and tribe by Jehovah; from their honorable position he will reduce them and their posterity and make them "contemptible and base before all the people" (verse 9). LXX. reads "your blessing" (singular), and since the pronoun in the next clause is in the singular in Hebrew, *it* (Eng. *them*), it is not improbable that LXX. has preserved the original. **I have cursed them already**—The curse has already been decided upon in the divine mind, because Jehovah knows their stubbornness. Some commentators consider the latter part of verse 2, beginning, "I have cursed them already," a later addition, because (1) LXX. does not agree with the Hebrew text, (2) they think verse 3 would make a better continuation of 2a. The arguments are inconclusive.

Verse 3 continues the threat. **I will corrupt**—Better, R. V., "rebuke," and so destroy (compare Zech. iii, 2). Wellhausen changes the verb into "I will cut off" (see next comment). **Your seed**—LXX. and other ancient versions read, with a different vocalization, "thy arm," which many commentators, even the conservative Keil, consider original, "because the priests did not practice agriculture." Wellhausen and those who accept his emendation of the verb read the clause, "I will cut off thine arm." Since the arm is used in the performance of priestly duties, Keil explains the expression *to rebuke the arm* as signifying "the neutralizing of the official duties performed at the altar and in the sanctuary"; that is, though they will continue their ministries, Jehovah will make them of no effect. However, if the reading of LXX. is accepted, the threat seems to imply more than a *neutralizing* of their min-

I will [1]corrupt your seed, and [2]spread dung upon your faces, *even* the dung of your solemn feasts; and [3]*one* shall [b]take you away with it. 4 And ye shall know that I have sent this commandment unto you, that my covenant might be with Levi, saith the LORD of hosts. 5 [c]My covenant

[1] Or, *reprove.*—[2] Heb. *scatter.*—[3] Or, *it shall take you away to it.*

[b] 1 Kings 14. 10.—[c] Num. 25. 12; Ezek. 34. 25; 37. 26.

istrations; it means the rebuke (destruction) of the arm, so that they can no longer perform their unacceptable service; in other words, the withdrawal of their authority, office, and power. The testimony of LXX., and especially of the literal translation of Aquila, cannot be disregarded, and it is not impossible that these ancient versions have preserved the original; nevertheless, the Hebrew text, as it now stands, also gives a satisfactory sense. Certainly *seed* cannot be understood of the seed sown by the priests, which God will curse and thus cause a failure of the crops; little better is the suggestion of Pusey, that it is the seed sown by the people. "Since the tithes," says he, "were assigned to them (the priests and Levites), the diminution of the harvest affected them." But in the Old Testament *seed* is used very frequently in the sense of *posterity*, and this would give good sense here. The covenant with Levi (verses 4, 5, 8) was to hold good also for his posterity, but the corruption of the present generation of priests had gone so far that the entire tribe deserved to be cut off; those who are priests now as well as their descendants will be affected by the curse.

Their own persons, which should be considered sacred, will receive the most shameful treatment. **Spread dung upon your faces**—A figure of the most ignominious treatment. **The dung of your solemn feasts**—For *solemn feasts* see on Hos. ii, 11. The dung is that which is left in the forecourts by the animals used for sacrifice on the feast days. This dung was unclean, and was to be carried to an unclean place and burned (Exod. xxix, 14; Lev. iv, 11; xvi, 27). Marti and others consider these words as well as the last clause a later addition, and the text of the latter they consider hopelessly corrupt; Nowack does not even attempt a translation. **One shall take you away with it**—R. V., more idiomatically, "ye shall be taken away with it." The obscurity of the clause can be seen best from the various interpretations given to the same even by those who express no doubts as to its originality. If the words are original, the following seems the most satisfactory interpretation: The Hebrew reads "unto it" (so margin), not "with it," and this should be retained; *unto it* can refer only to the dung spoken of in the preceding clause. Not only will dung be cast into their faces, but they will be taken up bodily and cast upon the dung heaps; in the words of Hitzig, "Dung shall be cast upon them, and they on the dung." Such treatment would be impossible while people looked upon the priests as mediators between them and God; it presupposes the dishonoring of the priests by Jehovah himself.

4. When these things come to pass the priests will be convinced that Jehovah has sent the threats just uttered. **This commandment**—Contained in verses 2, 3 (see on verse 1). **That my covenant might be with Levi**—This is undoubtedly the proper translation. All that Jehovah will do or has threatened to do is for the purpose of maintaining the covenant made in ancient times with Levi, which demanded of the priests holiness and assigned to them an important place in the working out of the divine plan of redemption. Jehovah would maintain that covenant, though to do this he would be compelled to cut off the entire present order of priests. Not all Levites were priests, and from these other Levites a new priesthood might be raised up, with which the old covenant might be continued. Over against

was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him [d]*for* the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name. 6 [e]The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he

[d] Deut. 33. 8, 9.

[e] Deut. 33. 10.

this interpretation there is another view, which translates, "that *it* may be my covenant with Levi." *It* is made to refer back to *commandment* in the preceding clause, and the meaning of the clause is thought to be that the commandment or threat contained in verses 2, 3 will henceforth determine the attitude of Jehovah toward Levi; it, so to speak, will take the place of the former covenant. The first interpretation is to be preferred because (1) it follows more closely the Hebrew; (2) it fits better into the prophet's argument. **Levi**—Meaning the tribe of Levi, to which the priests belonged. Malachi evidently holds the view concerning the origin of the priesthood among the Hebrews that is set forth in the Pentateuch. For the covenant with Levi, that is, the appointment of the priests, their privileges and obligations, see passages like Num. xviii, 1ff.; xxv, 10ff.; Deut. x, 8, 9; xxxiii, 8–10.

The reference to the covenant with Levi (verse 4) leads the prophet to describe in verses 5, 6 the true nature of this covenant; in verse 7 he points out what in the light of this covenant the character of the priests should be; with these ideals he contrasts the conduct of the priests whom he condemns (8), and he closes with a reiteration of the sentence of judgment (verse 9).

5. **Was . . . of life and peace**—Literally, *was the life and the peace;* that is, it aimed at life and peace. The article indicates that a specific kind of life and peace is in the mind of the author. **Life**—The continued existence as priests of Jehovah, equivalent to *everlasting priesthood* (Num. xxv, 13). **Peace**—"The sum of all the blessings requisite for well-being" (compare Num. xxv, 12). This twofold blessing Jehovah guaranteed to Levi. The construction of the rest of verse 5 is somewhat obscure. R. V. renders, "and I gave them to him that he might fear; and he feared me, and stood in awe of my name." This is preferable to A. V., but it is incorrect in translating "that he might fear" and in connecting these words with the preceding clause, "I gave them to him." "That he might fear" A. V. renders more accurately "*for* the fear," the italics indicating that the preposition is not in the original; literally, *the fear.* Here again the article is used to show that a particular kind of fear is meant, namely, the fear of Jehovah. What has been said thus far may lead to a right understanding of the grammatical construction of verse 5. *Fear* occupies the same position in the sentence as *life and peace;* so that verse 5 may be translated or paraphrased, "My covenant was with him; (my obligation being to give to him) the life and the peace, and I gave them to him; (his obligation being to give to me) the fear, and he feared me and stood in awe of me." **Fear . . . feared . . . stood in awe** (R. V.)—*Fear of Jehovah* is the Old Testament term for piety; it means a reverential attitude toward Jehovah, resulting in obedience of life and conduct. This Jehovah demanded of Levi, who promised to give it, and kept his promise. **My name**—See on i, 6, and references there.

Verse 6 states in greater detail how Levi met his obligation. **The law of truth was in his mouth**—For *law* see on Hos. iv, 6. It was the duty of the priests to instruct the people in the law of Jehovah (see on Hos. iv, 6; Mic. iii, 11; compare Lev. x, 11; Deut. xxxiii, 10; Hag. ii, 11; Zech. vii, 3); this duty Levi fulfilled faithfully; he gave instruction according to the truth. **Iniquity**—R. V., "unrighteousness." He did not teach for reward (Mic. iii, 11; compare Deut. xvi, 18, 19), nor did he call good that which was

walked with me in peace and equity, and did [f]turn many away from iniquity. 7 [g]For the priest's lips shall keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: [h]for he *is* the messenger of the LORD of hosts. 8 But ye are departed out of the way; ye [i]have caused many to [j]stumble at the law; [k]ye have corrupted the covenant of

[f] Jer. 23. 22; James 5. 20.—[g] Lev. 10. 11; Deut. 17. 9, 10; 24. 8; Ezra 7. 10; Jer. 18. 18; Hag. 2. 11, 12.

[h] Gal. 4. 14.—[i] 1 Sam. 2. 17; Jer. 18. 15.—[j] Or, *fall in the law.*—[k] Neh. 13. 29.

evil (compare i, 8). As a result his relations with Jehovah were of a friendly character. **He walked with me**—He sustained "confidential intercourse" with God, and walked, so to speak, by his side like an intimate companion and friend (compare Gen. v, 22). **In peace**—Neither side did anything to interrupt the happiness and fellowship (verse 5). **Equity**—R. V., "uprightness." His life corresponded to his words; he gave truthful instruction and he "practiced what he preached." **Did turn many away from iniquity**—By his teaching and his consistent life. In those early days the priest took an active interest in the spiritual welfare of the people; only too soon did he forget his duties (i, 6–14; compare Hos. iv, 6; Mic. iii, 11).

7. This conduct of Levi corresponded to the divine purpose concerning the priests, who as messengers of Jehovah of hosts should speak and live the truth continually. Marti, following Boehme, considers verse 7 an interpolation, because (1) it is not needed after verse 6; (2) it interrupts the connection between verse 6 and verse 8, and thus weakens the contrast between the conduct of Levi and that of the present priests; (3) 7b contains two peculiarities: (a) in verses 5, 6 Jehovah is the speaker, in 7b he is referred to in the third person; (b) the term "messenger of Jehovah" denotes in Malachi a being other than the priests (iii, 1). He considers the verse made up of elements taken from verse 6 and verse 8. The reasons are not conclusive.

Should keep knowledge—The knowledge of Jehovah (compare Isa. xi, 2), which is a clear insight into his moral character and into the requirements which are the outgrowth of this character (compare Hos. ii, 20; iv, 1). This the priests should possess in order that they may instruct others. **And they should seek the law at his mouth**—They, the people. It should be their privilege to consult the priests. *Law* is equivalent to instruction in the law or in the will of Jehovah. **For he is the messenger**—A causal clause belonging to the two preceding clauses. His position as a messenger of Jehovah makes it imperative for him to possess the knowledge of Jehovah, and should inspire the people to go to him for advice. In Hag. i, 13, the prophets are called messengers of Jehovah, and in iii, 1, the term is applied to a messenger *par excellence*, but it does not follow that one and the same author could not apply it here to the priests; in a very real sense the priests were the messengers of Jehovah, for their commission was to make known his will and law.

In verse 8 the prophet returns to the priests of his own day; they have completely lost sight of their high calling. **Ye are departed out of the way**—R. V., "turned aside." From the way in which they should have walked as priests and successors of Levi (compare verses 6, 7). They no longer walk with Jehovah in peace and righteousness (see on verse 6). **Ye have caused many to stumble at the law**—R. V., "in the law." They made the law a stumbling-block both by their false exposition of it and by destroying its authority through their disregard of it in their own lives. A sad contrast to the conduct of Levi, who turned "many away from unrighteousness." **Ye have corrupted**—Or, *destroyed.* **Levi**—Here

Levi, saith the LORD of hosts. 9 Therefore [l]have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but [5][6]have been partial in the law. 10 [m]Have we

[l] 1 Sam. 2. 30.—[5] Or, *lifted up the face against.*

[6] Heb. *accepted faces.*—[m] 1 Cor. 8. 6; Eph. 4. 6.

with the article, *the* Levi; used perhaps to express the idea that the covenant was not with Levi as an individual, but with the house of Levi, the Levite in a collective sense—the Levites. This covenant (see on verse 5) they have made of no effect; they have failed to meet their own obligations, and thus they have made it impossible for Jehovah to do his share.

9. He must cut *them* off, though the covenant itself must continue; a priesthood of a different character must be substituted (see on verse 4). **Therefore have I also**—The contrast would be brought out more forcibly by rendering, "Therefore I on my part have" (compare Amos iv, 6). **Made you contemptible and base**—In view of verses 2, 3 the tenses should be interpreted as *prophetic* perfects; Jehovah will surely bring them into contempt by refusing to accept and bless their ministrations (i, 9, 10). When people find out that the priests have lost the divine favor they will heap upon them the ignominies described in verse 3. The present attitude of Jehovah is the beginning of the fulfillment of the curse. **Before all the people**—Who now look upon them as their spiritual guides. **According as**—The judgment will be according to the *lex talionis*. As they have despised Jehovah (i, 6, 7, 12), so they will be despised by the people. **Ye have not kept my ways**—The ways marked out by Jehovah, which are uprightness in life and teaching (verse 6); from these they have swerved (verse 8). **Have been partial in the law**—This is only one of their many crimes (compare i, 6–14). *In the law* means in the administration or exposition of the law. How this partiality showed itself is not stated, but a passage like Mic. iii, 11 (compare also verse 5) may suggest how it was done. The same passage makes it also probable that the statements should not be restricted to decisions in legal disputes. Marti, following Torrey, thinks that this last accusation is out of place, since in the chief condemnation (i, 6–14) nothing has been said about partiality in the exposition or administration of the law. By omitting one letter and changing one vowel point he secures a text that may be translated, "and have not had regard for me in the law"; the last two clauses, "according as ye have not kept my ways, nor have had regard for me in the law." A similar expression occurs in i, 8, translated "accept your persons"=have regard for your persons. The emendation improves the text, but this in itself is not conclusive evidence that it restores the original reading.

CONDEMNATION OF MIXED MARRIAGES AND OF DIVORCE, 10–16.

With ii, 10, begins a new section, which, until quite recently, has been universally interpreted as dealing with marriage alliances between Jews and heathen women (10–12), and the putting away of Jewish wives by their husbands (13–16). Torrey (*Journal of Biblical Literature*, 1898, pp. 1ff.) declares this interpretation to be untenable: "To treat these expressions literally, as referring to an actual marriage and divorce, involves one in insuperable difficulties." And again: "There is one, and only one, admissible interpretation of the passage; namely, that which recognizes the fact that the prophet is using figurative language. Judah, the faithless husband, has betrayed the wife of his youth, the covenant religion, by espousing the daughter of a strange god, that is, a foreign cult. The whole passage from beginning to end

is a telling rebuke of unfaithfulness to Jehovah, which would prove the suicide of the nation." Adopting this interpretation, he gives the following summary of contents: "The unfaithfulness of part of the people threatens to forfeit for all the covenant of the fathers (verse 10). Judah has dealt falsely with the wife of his youth, the covenant religion, and is wedding a strange cult. The sanctuary of Jehovah is profaned (11, 12). The worshipers (who, of course, insist that they are still worshiping Jehovah) lament, because their offerings fail to bring a blessing, and are strangely unable to see why ill fortune has come upon them (13, 14a). Such sin merits the severest punishment, and Israel may well be warned (12, 15, 16)." Winckler agrees with Torrey in interpreting the passage figuratively, but he differs from him in dating it. Arguing along different lines, he attempts to show that the verses are directed against the innovations introduced in the temple by Antiochus Epiphanes during the early part of the second century B.C. This position he can establish only by means of unwarranted emendations of the text, a fact which in itself makes the view improbable. Torrey's view is not open to the same objection, and the example of Hosea (see p. 21f) shows that the marriage relation did serve to some of the prophets as a symbol of spiritual relations.

The chief argument of Torrey against the literal translation is expressed in these words: "To assume, in the first place [there seems to be no second], that divorce of Israelitish wives stood in any necessary or even probable connection with the wedding of women from other nations is ridiculous." The reply may be made: (1) Is it really improbable to suppose that in many cases there did exist a close connection between the two abuses? (2) There is nothing to prevent us from understanding the verses as a condemnation of two distinct crimes, practiced during the same general period, though by different individuals. The objection raised against the literal interpretation can hardly be regarded as conclusive.

All scholars admit that the passage is one of the most difficult in the entire book, and it is quite certain that the text has suffered in the course of transmission. As a result many emendations have been attempted (see comments); even entire verses have been omitted as later additions. G. A. Smith, for example, omits 11–13a, not because he considers the condemnation of heathen alliances unsuitable in the days of Malachi, but "because they disturb the argument," which, he thinks, deals exclusively with the divorce question. "To him [the prophet] the fatherhood of God is not merely a relation of power and authority, requiring reverence from the nation. It constitutes the members of the nation one close brotherhood, and against this divorce is a crime and unnatural cruelty." Marti agrees with him; on the other hand, Nowack and Wellhausen among recent commentators retain the whole section, interpreting it literally of marriages with heathen women and divorces of Jewish wives. Whether or not this interpretation will involve us in "insuperable difficulties" will be seen as we proceed.

Verse 10 stands at the head of the entire discussion. The prophet adheres to his custom (see on i, 2) of commencing with a general statement, which he applies to the individual cases as he proceeds. In verse 10 he emphasizes the generally accepted truth that Jehovah is the father of all Israelites and the related truth that all Jews are brothers and sisters. Every crime against this fraternal relation, be it the marrying of foreign women or the putting away of Jewish wives, is an offense against Jehovah and against the covenant which binds Israel to Jehovah as son to father.

not all one father? [n]hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers?

[n] Job 31. 15.—[7] Or, *ought to love.*

11 Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the LORD which he [7]loved, [o]and

[o] Ezra 9. 1; 10. 2; Neh. 13. 23.

Have we not all one father?—That is, Jehovah. He was the father of Israel in a sense in which he was not the father of other nations, and this the people would readily admit (see on i, 6, and references there, especially Hos. xi, 1). **Hath not one God created us?**—The prophet is not concerned here with the creation of all mankind—it also he would have ascribed to Jehovah—but only with that of the Jews. One and the same God has created all of them. This again no one would deny. But if the two propositions stated are correct, then the individual Israelites are bound to one another in a close bond of brotherhood. In i, 6, the prophet inquires why they do not meet the obligations toward Jehovah which this peculiar relation imposes upon them; here, why they disregard the obligations toward one another which grow out of this same relation. **Deal treacherously every man against his brother**—Better, *one against another*, since offenses against women receive chief condemnation. They are dealing with one another in a manner contrary to the spirit of brotherhood. Wherein the treacherous dealings consisted is stated in the succeeding verses (11, 14, 15, 16). **By profaning the covenant of our fathers**—The covenant meant is that made by Jehovah with the ancestors of the Jews, when he chose them to be his own peculiar people (compare, for example, Exod. xix, 5, 6; Lev. xx, 24, 26). They desecrated this covenant when they entered into foreign marriage alliances and when they treated one another in an unfair spirit.

Verses 11, 12 give the first specification under the general indictment in verse 10. They have desecrated the covenant by marrying "the daughter of a strange god." **Judah**—The postexilic community, which settled chiefly in the territory formerly occupied by Judah. **Hath dealt treacherously**—Repeated from verse 10, to emphasize the accusation about to be uttered. **An abomination is committed**—Everything contrary to the spirit of his covenant with Israel is an abomination to Jehovah. **In Israel**—If original, *Israel* is identical with *Judah* in the preceding clause. After the exile the distinction between north and south disappeared, hence the two names might be used interchangeably. Some commentators, however, consider *Israel* an interpolation; its omission would produce a more satisfactory parallelism: "Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Jerusalem." The latter is named as a poetic variation; it is practically equivalent to Judah and denotes the entire postexilic community; perhaps it is meant to emphasize the idea that the abomination has been committed in the very dwelling place of Jehovah. **Profaned the holiness**—Better, margin R. V., "sanctuary," meaning the chosen people itself, which is holy because it is set apart for the service of Jehovah (see on Zech. xiv, 20). Judah has become desecrated through the conduct of its own individual members, hence it is no longer a fit dwelling place for Jehovah. **Which he loved**—The contrast between the loving attitude of Jehovah toward the people and the rebellion of the people toward their God brings out more forcibly the baseness of their conduct (compare Isa. i, 2–4; Hos. xi, 1ff.; Amos ii, 6ff.). How they have profaned the sanctuary of Jehovah is stated in the last clause. **Hath married the daugh-**

hath married the daughter of a strange god. 12 The LORD will cut off the man that doeth this, [8]the master and the scholar, out of the tabernacles of Jacob, [p]and him that offereth an offering unto the LORD

[8] Or, *him that waketh, and him that answereth.*——[p] Neh. 13. 28, 29.

ter of a strange god—The Jews, the sons of Jehovah, marry women who are worshipers of other deities; in doing this they introduce into their own nation impure blood and impure religious ideas, the holy seed is mingled with the seed of the land (Ezra ix, 2), and thus they desecrate it in the sight of their God. For the prevalence of mixed marriages in the days of Malachi see Ezra ix, 1ff.; x, 1ff.; Neh. xiii, 23ff.

12. Jehovah must punish this desecration with destruction. The entire verse is more or less obscure, but the translation of R. V. is to be preferred: "Jehovah will cut off, to the man that doeth this, him that waketh and him that answereth, out of the tents of Jacob, and him that offereth an offering unto Jehovah of hosts." A more literal rendering would be in the form of a wish, "May Jehovah cut off . . ."; but, since the wish is born of the conviction that Jehovah will do it, the translation of R. V. is permissible. **To the man** (R. V.)—The judgment will fall upon the criminal, but it will not stop with his own destruction; his offspring also will be slain. **Him that waketh and him that answereth** (R. V.)—A.V., "the master and the scholar," a translation that is based upon ancient rabbinical tradition. Of these words Torrey says, "The phrase has always been, and is still, a riddle." All interpreters agree that an expression including the entire family or posterity of the condemned man is expected, and various attempts have been made to get this meaning from the present Hebrew text. It is easy to call the phrase "a proverbial expression for every living member of the transgressor's family"; but to prove the assertion is more difficult. That the Hebrew does at times express "totality by opposites" is true (Deut. xxxii, 36), but is *wake* the opposite of *answer*? Von Orelli renders the first verb "that calleth," but this translation is without support in Hebrew usage. Perowne says, "It is taken from sentries or watchmen who as they go their rounds give their challenge and receive the watchword in reply." Then, following Gesenius, he calls attention to the Arabic expression, "no one crying out and no one answering," that is, no one alive; but again, *wake* is not the same as *cry out*. And yet if the text is correct, some such meaning must be given to the words. Following LXX., Wellhausen, by changing a single consonant, gets "witness and defender"; G. A. Smith, "champion"; as if the prophet meant to say that everyone who might take the part of the criminal would be cut off. It may be questioned whether this is really an improvement over the present text, for the introduction of legal terms and a judgment scene seems unexpected and out of place in this context. Peshitto reads, "his son and his son's son," which expresses the right idea, but, as Torrey remarks, may be only a sensible guess. On the basis of "root . . . branch" in iv, 1, Torrey suggests to read the same words here, completely (see on Amos ii, 9). If an emendation is needed, which is by no means certain, since the present reading may embody an idiomatic saying whose full force is no longer understood, that of Torrey is the most satisfactory offered thus far. **The tents of Jacob** (R. V.)—A poetic designation of the entire Jewish community. **Him that offereth an offering**—These words are not to be limited to the priests, but include everyone "who is willing to offer a gift upon the altar for men of this description" (Jerome).

In verse 13 the prophet passes to the second crime against the covenant (verse 10), the divorcing of Jewish

of hosts. 13 And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth *it* with goodwill at your hand.

14 Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and [q]the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously; [r]yet *is* she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. 15 And [s]did not he make one? Yet had he the [g]residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek [10] [t]a godly seed.

[q] Prov. 5.18.—[r] Prov. 2. 17.—[s] Matt. 19. 4, 5.—[g] Or, *excellency.*

[10] Heb. *a seed of God.*—[t] Ezra 9. 2; 1 Cor. 7. 14.

wives, which in many cases—though by no means always—may have been closely connected with the marrying of heathen women, a fact which may explain the joining of the two accusations. The utterance of Malachi marks an advance from Deut. xxiv, 1, which permits divorce under certain conditions, toward the words of Jesus (Matt. xix, 3ff.), due, perhaps, to the fact that in his day the divorce evil had become prevalent enough to prove a menace to the integrity of the community, so that it was necessary to take stringent measures against it.

And this have ye done again—R. V., "And this again ye do." The words introduce the second accusation and might be rendered freely, "And, secondly, ye do this." The rest of the verse is explanatory of *this.* **Covering**—Though this is a literal translation, R. V. expresses the thought more idiomatically, "ye cover." **Tears. . . . weeping, . . . crying out**—R. V., "sighing." Not the weeping and sighing of the cast-off wives, but the weeping of the treacherous and profane in the community (verse 10). **Insasmuch**—They cry out in despair, because they cannot understand why Jehovah refuses to look with favor upon their religious ceremonies (compare i, 9).

14. **Wherefore**—Wherefore does Jehovah pay no attention to them? This cry gives the prophet an opportunity to present the accusation. **Because Jehovah hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth**—Of the marriage as well as of the wicked putting away, and as a righteous God he must avenge the wrong; he cannot look with favor upon a hypocrite (Gen. xxxi, 50; compare Isa. liv, 6). **Dealt treacherously**—In putting her aside when he should have loved her faithfully. **Thy companion**—In joy and sorrow. This companionship should have united them more closely. **The wife of thy covenant**—Not the marriage covenant, but the covenant with Jehovah (verse 10). In contrast to "the daughter of the strange god" (verse 11), the wife belonging to the religious community of Jehovah. To cast off such a one is a desecration of the covenant (verse 10).

The translation and interpretation of 15a are matters of dispute; indeed, it is very doubtful if, without deep-going emendations, an entirely satisfactory sense can be had; but who can be certain that the "emended" text represents the thought of the prophet? Two interpretations of the text as it stands may be given. The one is that of Pusey, who follows closely the translation of A. V. **Did not he**—God. **Make one**—Adam. "In order to designate the unity of marriage, he willed to create but one." **Yet had he the residue of the spirit**—The breath of life by which man became a living soul (Gen. ii, 7); this God possessed in an abundant measure, so that, had he desired, he might have created any number of men or women, but he deliberately chose the other way. **Wherefore one?**—Wherefore did God create one man, and did create from him a mate, the two to be *one,* never to be put asunder? The answer is supplied by the succeeding clause. **That he might seek a godly seed**—A seed worthy of God. Only in the manner selected could he accomplish

Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal [11]treacherously against the wife of his youth. 16 For [u]the LORD, the God of Israel,

[11] Or, *unfaithfully.*

[u] Deut. 24. 1; Matt. 5. 32; 19. 8.

this purpose. 15b is an exhortation to the prophet's contemporaries. These things being so, they would better be careful about their conduct. Embodying this interpretation, Perowne gives the following translation of 15a: "Did not he (God) make one (one man, and out of him one woman, and the twain 'one flesh')? And (yet) the residue of the spirit (of life) was his (so that he could, had it pleased him, have created, for example, one man and many women). And why (did he make) the one? He sought (what only by the purity and integrity of the marriage bond can be secured) a godly seed." Much, indeed, has to be read between the lines, but when all that is placed in parenthesis is read in or gathered from the text, the result is not inappropriate. But is it the thought Malachi desired to express? He certainly *might* have expressed it with less obscurity.

Most scholars who retain the present text prefer an entirely different translation and interpretation. In part this translation is given in margin R. V.; for the whole of 15a that of Von Orelli may be quoted: "And not one has done this, while yet a remnant of spirit was in him. And how (did) the one so? In seeking a seed of God." 15b is again understood as an appeal to the prophet's contemporaries. According to this translation the prophet means to contrast the conduct of his contemporaries with the actions of past generations, and he declares that no one who had even a remnant of reason or of sense for right and wrong had ever put away his wife in the manner in which they were doing it. **Spirit**—A sense of right and wrong, the faculty that determines moral and religious actions. **How did the one so?** (see translation above)—These words must be understood either as an objection raised by some bystander, or by the prophet himself to forestall an objection by some one else. The *one* would be Abraham, who put away Hagar. If their conduct is so reprehensible in the sight of God, how did this friend of God come to put away one who had borne children to him? To this the prophet replies, he did so in order to raise up a godly seed. Had he retained Hagar and her child, the covenant seed might have become tainted and corrupt.

This translation reproduces the Hebrew more faithfully than the other, but again much has to be read between the lines. The construction is peculiar, and *the one* as a designation of Abraham, who has not yet been named, appears strange. Besides, the analogy breaks down, for Abraham did not put away the wife of his youth, Sarah, but Hagar, who had never been his legitimate wife. It is a very easy way out of the difficulty to say, "One feels the holy indignation under the power of which the prophet speaks in the style, which is abrupt and obscure." The present writer, however, is inclined to think that the obscurity has arisen not so much from "holy indignation" as from a corruption of the text. Wellhausen rewrites the text, "Hath not one God (compare verse 10) created and sustained our breath? And what does he desire? A seed of God." This gives good sense, for it furnishes two reasons why the hearers should abstain from their evil practices: (1) *one* God has created both husband and wife (see on verse 10); (2) he desires a pure offspring, which can be had only if they retain their Jewish wives. But is it the original text?

15b is an exhortation to discontinue the practices condemned in verse 14. **Take heed to your spirit**—Identical in meaning with "lay to heart" (verse 2) and "take heed to yourselves" (Jer. xvii, 21; Deut. iv,

saith [12]that he hateth [13]putting away: for *one* covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.

17 [x]Ye have wearied the LORD with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied *him?* When ye say, Every one that doeth evil *is* good in the sight of the LORD, and he delighteth in them; or, Where *is* the God of judgment?

[12] Or, *if he hate* her, *put* her *away.*— [13] Heb. *to put away.*

[x] Isa. 43. 24; Amos 2. 13; chap. 3. 13–15.

15). The Hebrew reads in the last clause "the wife of *thy* youth," which should be changed—so the English translations—into "*his* youth," or, following some of the ancient versions, the whole sentence should read, "and deal not treacherously with the wife of thy youth."

Verse 16 supports the exhortation of 15b. **That he hateth**—Better, R. V., "I hate" (see on Amos v, 21). He hates and must hate abominations of every sort. **Putting away**—A common expression for divorcing a wife. In Deut. xxiv, 1–5, provision is made for divorce under certain conditions; Malachi seems nearer the spirit of Matt. v, 32; xix, 3ff., than Deuteronomy. The condemnation of the custom by Malachi implies that in his day the law was wantonly abused. **For one covereth violence with his garment**—R. V., "and him that covereth his garment with violence"—do I hate; literally, *and one covers with violence his garment.* If the literal translation is accepted verse 16 presents two reasons why the hearers should discontinue their practices: (1) Jehovah hates their conduct; (2) by it they cover themselves with violence or sin. R. V. coördinates these words with the preceding clause and renders, "and him that covereth his garment with violence" (by putting away his wife); such a one also Jehovah hates. If *his garment* could be understood as equivalent to *his wife*—so after Arabic analogies, Hitzig, Ewald, and others, but Hebrew usage does not favor it—this would give good sense; but the general thought that God hates the sinner appears out of place in the midst of the specific denunciations of this section. One can hardly suppress a suspicion that here also the text has suffered. The section closes with a repetition of the exhortation to desist from the reprehensible conduct.

Jehovah's Approach in Judgment, ii, 17–iii, 5.

In ii, 17, the prophet introduces to the reader a new class of thinkers in the postexilic community, the skeptics, who have lost faith in Jehovah and in his word, because the sinful prospered while the good suffered. From these inequalities they concluded that Jehovah was taking no interest in the affairs of the nation and doubted that he would ever appear in judgment to right the wrongs (ii, 17). To this complaint Jehovah replies that he will suddenly appear, preceded by a messenger who will prepare his way (iii, 1); his coming will be terrible to all who have departed from the right, for he will come like a refiner's fire to burn up the dross (2). The priests he will purify, so that they may again offer sacrifices in "righteousness" (3, 4); and from the nation at large he will sweep away everything that is contrary to his will (5).

17. **Ye**—The latter part of the verse indicates that the prophet here addresses the skeptics who doubt that Jehovah takes an interest in the affairs of the nation, or that he is a "God of justice." **Have wearied**—His patience is exhausted, he can keep silent no longer. **With your words**—Quoted by the prophet in the rest of the verse. To this general accusation some one might reply (see on i, 2), How have we wearied him with our words? And the prophet promptly meets the challenge. **Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of Jehovah**—So it would seem to those

CHAPTER III.

BEHOLD, [a]I will send my messenger, and he shall [b]prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, [c]even the messenger

[a] Matt. 11. 10; Mark 1. 2; Luke 1. 76; 7. 27.—[b] Isa. 40. 3.—[c] Isa. 63. 9.

who shared the philosophic thought of the day, that prosperity was an evidence of piety and adversity a sign of godlessness. The same complaint finds expression in Psa. xxxvii, xlix, lxxiii. "Behold, these are the wicked and being always at ease they increase in riches; surely, in vain have I cleansed my heart, and washed my hands in innocency; for all day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning" (Psa. lxxiii, 12–14). But, unlike the psalmist, the contemporaries of Malachi did not go "into the sanctuary of God" to have their perplexity solved; on the contrary, they recklessly challenged Jehovah. The evil doers who prospered in the days of Malachi were the nobles who oppressed the poor (Neh. v), though it is not impossible that the prosperity of the nations surrounding the Jews, compared with the poverty of the chosen people, was partly responsible for this skepticism. **He delighteth in them**—Only on this assumption could they explain their prosperity. **Or**—If the preceding accusation is not deserved. **Where is the God of judgment?**—R. V., "of justice." If he has no pleasure in the wicked why does he not interfere in righteous judgment? (Compare Isa. v, 18, 19.)

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Jehovah accepts the challenge implied in the question and replies in iii, 1ff., that he will appear speedily in a terrible judgment, that will result in the utter annihilation of the wicked, and in the purification and exaltation of the faithful. But before he himself appears he will send a messenger to prepare his way. **Behold, I will send**—Better, *Behold, I am about to send.* The Hebrew construction implies the imminence of the event (G.-K., 116p). **My messenger**—As the coming of an earthly king is heralded by a forerunner, so the coming of Jehovah will be heralded by a messenger. This messenger is not to be identified with "the messenger of the covenant" in this same verse, nor is he identical with the prophet, as if he declared himself to be the forerunner of Jehovah; on the other hand, he is identical with Elijah mentioned in iv, 5. **Prepare the way**—By removing every obstacle, so that Jehovah can move along smoothly. This forerunner is needed the more because Jehovah will come suddenly. The prediction is based upon Isa. xl, 3ff. **The Lord**—God himself. This title, which denotes the divine sovereignty, is frequently used by Isaiah, as here, to introduce threats. The change from the first person to the third is not uncommon in prophetic discourse. **Whom ye seek**—Points back to ii, 17, where they are represented as inquiring where he is (compare Isa. v, 18). **Suddenly**—Unexpectedly (compare verse 5; Luke xxi, 34). **To his temple**—From which his activities will proceed once more (compare Amos i, 2; Isa. ii, 2–4). The coming will be in fulfillment of the prophecies of Haggai (ii, 9) and Zechariah (ii, 5, 10; viii, 3; compare Ezek. xliii, 7). **Even the messenger of the covenant**—According to this translation the messenger of the covenant is identical with the Lord; if so, he would be the same as the "angel of Jehovah," who sometimes is identical with Jehovah himself (see on Zech. i, 11). This identification is favored by the parallelism and the entire context, which knows of the coming of only *one* person to judgment. Why the title is applied to Jehovah is not quite clear; some have seen here an allusion to the new covenant of Jeremiah (xxxi, 31–34); Smend explains it as a title describing Jehovah as the one living

of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, [d]he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts. 2 But who may abide [e]the day of his coming? and [f]who shall stand when he appeareth?

[d] Hag. 2. 7.—[e] Chap. 4. 1.—[f] Rev. 6. 17.

for [g]he *is* like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: 3 And [h]he shall sit *as* a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver,

[g] See Isa. 4. 4; Matt. 3. 10–12.—[h] Isa. 1. 25; Zech. 13. 9.

in the midst of the covenant people (compare Dan. xi, 22, 28, 30). Both these interpretations seem far-fetched. It seems much better to bring the expression into connection with the covenant mentioned in ii, 10, and alluded to several times in chapter ii. Jehovah, appearing for judgment, is called the messenger of the covenant, because by means of the judgment he seeks to reëstablish the covenant (compare verses 3–5), which priests and people have so shamefully desecrated. **Whom ye delight in**—Identical in meaning with "whom ye seek" in the parallel clause; like it, it refers back to ii, 17. There they express a wish for the appearance of Jehovah; this wish will be granted, though the sequel may not be to their liking (compare Amos v, 18–20). R. V. reads, "*and* the messenger of the covenant," as if the messenger and the Lord were two distinct persons. Those who accept this translation, which the Hebrew permits, identify this messenger either with the messenger who is to be the forerunner of Jehovah, or with a being not mentioned otherwise. To identify the two messengers with one another is not possible, since the one precedes Jehovah while the other accompanies him. The other view sees in the messenger of the covenant the patron angel of the covenant nation (Dan. x, 13, 20), who will appear with Jehovah and will sit by the side of Jehovah when he comes to dwell in the midst of the people. This is not an impossible interpretation; but on the whole the first interpretation discussed, which identifies the messenger of the covenant with the Lord, is to be preferred. **Behold, he shall come**—The promise that Jehovah will come is reiterated for the sake of emphasis, and receives additional strength from the closing formula, "saith Jehovah of hosts."

2. However, they will be disappointed when he appears, for he will come to execute a terrible judgment (compare Amos v, 18–20). **Who may abide . . . who shall stand**—The moral and spiritual condition of the contemporaries of Malachi was such that it would be difficult for any one to endure the manifestation of Jehovah, for it meant death and destruction to everything impure. **Day of his coming . . . when he appeareth**—As announced in verse 1. This is the *day of Jehovah* (see on Joel i, 15). **Refiner's fire**—Which burns up all the impure ingredients that are mixed with the precious metal (compare Zech. xiii, 9). **Fullers' soap**—The process of fulling "seems to have consisted in washing the material with some preparation of lye, beating or rubbing it, and exposing it to the rays of the sun." This preparation of lye, which was intended to remove all impurity, is here called soap (compare Jer. ii, 22). That the day of Jehovah is a day of purging and purification is an idea frequently expressed in the Old Testament (Isa. iv, 2–4; Zech. xiii, 9; compare Matt. iii, 12).

3, 4. The first task of the Lord will be to purge the priests, that he may have once more (compare ii, 5, 6) a pure priesthood. Here as everywhere in the book the priests stand in the foreground. **He shall sit**—As a judge upon the judgment seat; and yet his primary purpose is not to condemn but to sift the good from the worthless, though in the process of sifting the dross will be burned. **Sons of Levi**—The priests, who were the descendants of Levi (see on ii, 4, 5, and references there). **Purge them**—From

that they may [i]offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness. 4 Then [k]shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in [1]former years. 5 And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, [1]and against false swearers, and against those that [2]oppress the hireling in *his* wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger *from his right*, and fear not me,

[i] 1 Pet. 2. 5.—[k] Chap. 1. 11.—[1] Or, *ancient.*

[1] Zech. 5. 4; James 5. 4, 12.—[2] Or, *defraud.*

all sins and impurities that have made them unfit to represent the people before Jehovah (compare i, 9; ii, 8, 9). This done, they may again serve before the altar. **In righteousness**—Not only in outward conformity to the law, but in a right state of heart, mind, and life. Offered by the regenerated priests, sacrifice will again be acceptable to Jehovah, and not, as now, abominable (i, 9; ii, 8). **Days of old, . . . former years**—When the faithful Levi (ii, 4–6) ministered in the sanctuary.

5. Jehovah will prove himself a God of judgment (ii, 17) to every evil doer, for the judgment will not be confined to the priests; the whole nation will feel it and all sinners will be swept away. **Near to you**—To the people at large. **To judgment**—A direct reference to the closing words of ii, 17. **A swift witness**—Jehovah is swift because (1) he will no longer delay but come speedily (iii, 1; compare Zeph. i, 14); (2) he knows the facts, and therefore needs to spend no time in securing the evidence; (3) he is both witness and judge (compare Isa. iii, 13–15; Psa. l, 6, 7), and so can execute the judgment promptly. **Sorcerers**—This is a general term denoting all persons who claimed to possess power over evil spirits, or to reveal secrets, or to consult the dead, etc. (compare Exod. xxii, 18; in the New Testament, Acts viii, 9; xiii, 6). **Adulterers**—The low estimate placed upon the marriage relation (ii, 10–16) would in many cases result in the practice of adultery. The laws against this form of vice were very strict (Lev. xx, 10; Exod. xx, 14; compare Hos. iv, 2). **False swearers**—See on Zech. v, 3, 4; Hos. iv, 2; compare Lev. xix, 12. **Oppress the hireling in his wages**—Hebrew usage as well as the context favors the omission of "in his wages," though the omission does in no wise affect the sense (compare Lev. xix, 13; Deut. xxiv, 14, 15). **Widow, . . . fatherless**—Also dependent upon the verb "oppress." These two classes, in many cases without human defenders, were under the special care of Jehovah and of his people (Exod. xxii, 22–24; compare Isa. i, 17), but again and again the unscrupulous nobles forgat their obligations (compare Isa. i, 23; x, 2). **Turn aside the stranger**—See on Amos v, 12. The Hebrew *gêr*, translated "stranger," R. V. "sojourner," is a technical term, which denotes a foreigner settled temporarily in Israel. W. R. Smith describes him as "a man of another tribe or district who, coming to sojourn in a place where he was not strengthened by the presence of his own kin, put himself under the protection of a clan or of a powerful chief." Like the widows and orphans, these *sojourners* were under the special protection of Jehovah (compare Deut. xxvii, 19; Exod. xxii, 21). **Fear not me**—See on ii, 5. The lack of this fear was responsible for all other transgressions. In this manner the "God of judgment" will vindicate himself.

The Wrongful Withholding of Tithes and Offerings, 6–12.

Verse 6 is somewhat obscure; therefore it is difficult to trace the exact relation of this section to the one preceding. Some prefer to make verse 6 the conclusion of the preceding paragraph (see below) and to begin anew with verse 7, but the verse is equally

saith the LORD of hosts. 6 For I *am* the LORD, [m]I change not; [n]therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

7 Even from the days of [o]your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept *them*.

[m] Num. 23. 19; Rom. 11. 29; James 1. 17.

[n] Lam. 3. 22.—[o] Acts 7. 51.

suitable as an introduction to what follows. Verses 6–12 as a whole are the continuation of the thought of ii, 17–iii, 5, since they also are directed against the skeptics of ii, 17; and therefore we can speak of a break between verse 5 and verse 6 only in the sense that in iii, 6-12, the prophet deals with a new phase of the question under consideration; there is continuity of thought in the entire section ii, 17–iv, 3.

The skeptics have come to doubt that Jehovah is doing anything for them or the nation, and as a result they no longer observe the requirements of the law concerning tithes and offerings (6–8). They have cried out for his manifestations (ii, 17), but, says the prophet, he can return in power and mercy only if the people repent and turn to him (7). When they inquire how they are to return he informs them, by the bringing of tithes and offerings which they owe to him. If they do this they will soon discover that Jehovah still lives and that he can bless them with abundant prosperity (9–12). In order to rightly understand the spirit of the prophet's message, the connection of this passage with the one preceding (especially verses 3–5) must not be overlooked. He condemns the neglect of tithes and offerings, not because he considers that in itself the greatest sin in the sight of God, but because he understands that this neglect is due "to a religious cause, unbelief in Jehovah, and that the return to belief in him could not therefore be shown in a more practical way than by the payment of tithes."

Verse 6 declares that the charge brought in ii, 17, is unwarranted. **I am the Lord, I change not**—R. V., "I, Jehovah, change not." He is still the "God of judgment." If there seems to be a change in the character of his manifestations, this must be accounted for by the change in the people's attitude toward him (compare Num. xxiii, 19; James i, 17). **Therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed**—This can only mean that because he is an unchangeable God, still recognizing certain covenant obligations (see on ii, 5), the destruction which they fully deserve on account of their rebellion has been withheld thus far. It must be admitted that this thought is not quite suitable in the present context; a thought like "but ye, sons of Jacob, have changed" would be more in accord with the preceding statement. There is no objection against substituting *but* for *therefore*, as the Hebrew permits either translation; the difficulty is in the verb. Von Orelli, with a slight change in the vocalization, reads "you have not completed," that is, your sins. This reading connects verse 6 more closely with verse 5, and the verse becomes the conclusion of iii, 1–5, "I will be a swift witness, . . . for I change not (I am still the God of judgment)"; on the other hand, "you have not stopped sinning." The emendation improves the present text, but it does not give the thought one would naturally expect. There remains more or less obscurity and uncertainty.

In accord with his custom to state first a general proposition, and then enlarge upon it, the prophet, in verse 7, points out more fully their inconsistency and fickleness hinted at in verse 6. **From the days of your fathers**—An indefinite expression pointing to the distant past; from time immemorial they have rebelled against Jehovah. **Mine ordinances**—Or, *statutes*. This term comprehends here all expressions of the divine will, written or oral, set forth by priest or prophet; all alike they have disregarded. This dis-

[p]Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. [q]But ye said, Wherein shall we return?

8 Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? [r]In tithes and offerings. 9 Ye *are* cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, *even* this whole nation. 10 [s]Bring ye all the tithes into [t]the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the [u]windows of heaven, and [3] [x]pour you out a blessing, that *there shall* not *be room* enough *to receive it.* 11 And I will rebuke [y]the

[p] Zech. 1. 3.—[q] Chap. 1. 6.—[r] Neh. 13. 10, 12.—[s] Prov. 3. 9, 10.—[t] 1 Chron. 26. 20; 2 Chron. 31. 11; Neh. 10. 38; 13. 12.—[u] Gen. 7. 11; 2 Kings 7. 2.—[3] Heb. *empty out.*—[x] 2 Chron. 31. 10.—[y] Amos 4. 9.

obedience on their part is responsible for the failure of Jehovah to manifest himself as in the days gone by. **Return unto me**—In obedience and love (see on Hos. xiv, 1; Amos iv, 6; Joel ii, 12). **I will return**—In mercy and loving-kindness. As in other cases (i, 2, 6; ii, 17), the prophet forestalls any excuse or attempt of self-justification. **Wherein shall we return?**—In what particular? The question is intended to make the impression that they have done all that may be expected of them.

8. The reply is in the form of a question. **Will a man rob God?**—A better translation of the first two clauses would be, "Will a man rob God, that you rob me?" (Compare Amos vi, 12.) A question of astonishment that anyone should think of such a preposterous thing; and yet they have done it and are still doing it. The verb is unquestionably used in the sense of "defraud"—they do not pay their just dues; but there seems to be insufficient reason for substituting a different verb in Hebrew. Again an attempt is made to combat the prophet, and again he meets the objection. **In tithes and offerings**—These they have withheld, and by doing so they have defrauded Jehovah. The last word means literally *peace offering* (compare Ezek. xliv, 30; Neh. x, 39), which belongs to the priests (Ezek. xliv, 30); here it includes every offering due to Jehovah. How they are defrauding him is stated in i, 6–14. The regulation of the tithes is found in Deut. xiv, 22ff.; Lev. xxvii, 30ff.; Num. xviii, 21ff. (compare Amos iv, 4); they also went to those ministering in the sanctuaries. Some portion they may have given, but not the proper percentage (compare Acts v, 1ff.). 9. **You are cursed with a curse**—Jehovah has already shown his displeasure, and still they continue in the evil ways. Wherein the curse consisted is not stated, but verses 10–12 imply that it came in the form of drought, poor harvests, and perhaps a plague of locusts. The curse has fallen upon the whole nation, because the whole nation has defrauded him.

In verse 10 the prophet returns to the question asked in verse 7; he informs his hearers wherein they should return. **Bring ye all the tithes**—R. V., "the whole tithe." The emphasis is upon *whole;* fraud is to cease, and they are to bring to Jehovah his full share. **Storehouse**—Connected with the temple and built for the purpose of receiving gifts of this sort (compare 2 Chron. xxxi, 11, 12; Neh. x, 38, 39). **Meat**—R. V., "food"; both for Jehovah (see on i, 7) and for the ministering priests and Levites. **Prove me**—Whether or not he is the God he was in the days when he chose Israel (iii, 6), the God of judgment (ii, 17), who rewards the good. That he punishes the evil they should have discovered long ago (verses 9, 11, 12). **Herewith**—Giving to Jehovah all his dues. **If I will not**—May be translated "surely I will." **Open . . . the windows of heaven**—A figure denoting abundance of supply; the blessings will come like pouring rain (Gen. vii, 11; Isa. xxiv, 18; compare 2 Kings vii, 2). **There shall not be room enough**—Literally, *until there is no need,* which means,

devourer for your sakes, and he shall not [4]destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts. 12 And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be [z]a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts.

13 [a]Your words have been stout against me, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, What have we spoken *so much* against thee? 14 [b]Ye have said, It *is* vain to serve God: and what profit *is it* that we have kept [5]his ordinance, and that we have walked [6]mournfully before the

[4] Heb. *corrupt.*——[z] Dan. 8. 9.——[a] Chap. 2. 17.——[b] Job 21. 14, 15; Psa. 73. 13; Zeph. 1, 12——[5] Heb. *his observation.*——[6] Heb. *in black.*

in superabundance. While the whole of verse 10 may be understood as a promise of blessings of every sort, in view of verses 11, 12 it is not improbable that the prophet has in mind a specific blessing, abundant rain, the lack of which has caused the harvests to fail (compare Joel i, 16–20; ii, 23; Amos iv, 7, 8). **Rebuke**—The rebuke of Jehovah will cause flight or destruction. **The devourer**—The locust, so called because of his destructiveness (see on Joel i, 7; compare Amos iv, 9). **For your sakes**—Who in those days will deserve the favor of Jehovah. **Your vine cast her fruit before the time**—Before it ripens and brings benefit to the owner. **Field**—See on Joel i, 11.

12. The prosperity of the people will become so marked that all the nations will call them blessed (Zech. viii, 13, 23). **A delightsome land**—A land where joy and felicity reign (Zech. vii, 14; Isa. lxii, 4). In iii, 1–5, the prophet states how Jehovah will manifest himself as a God of judgment by destroying the evil doers; in iii, 6–12, how he will do it by rewarding the good.

A NEW DEFENSE OF JEHOVAH'S JUSTICE, iii, 13–iv, 3.

These verses are parallel in thought to ii, 17–iii, 12. They also are addressed to a class of doubters (ii, 17) whose confidence in Jehovah is shaken by the apparent inequalities of life; the good suffer while the wicked prosper (13–15). They are informed that their complaint is unwarranted, that Jehovah's eye is over all, and, though at present the lot of the pious may seem hard, Jehovah keeps a record of those who are faithful, and when he appears in his temple (iii, 1) he will make a distinction between the righteous and the wicked (16–18). The wicked will be destroyed root and branch (iv, 1), while the righteous will be exalted forever (2, 3). In this wise, the prophet argues, Jehovah will prove himself a God of judgment and of justice.

13. **Your words**—Who are the persons addressed is made clear in verses 14, 15, a class of people whose faith was shaken. The prophet may have in mind the same persons whose skepticism is met in iii, 1–12. **Stout**—Literally, *are strong.* Compare the colloquial "to be hard on a person." Their words contain a serious accusation, which casts reflections on the character of Jehovah. Again the prophet places the general accusation at the head, to be expanded in the succeeding verses, and again he makes a question raised in self-defense his starting point (see on i, 2). **What have we spoken so much**—*So much* should be omitted; literally, *what have we conversed,* that is, spoken to one another, against Jehovah. It would seem that the complaint was a subject of conversation.

In verses 14, 15 the prophet answers the question by reminding them of the contents of their conversations. **Serve God . . . have kept his ordinance . . . have walked mournfully**—The first is a general statement that they recognized Jehovah as their Lord and Master, the second affirms ready obedience to his will (Zech. iii, 7), the third refers to acts of penitence and mourning over shortcomings and sins (Joel ii, 12). They claim that,

LORD of hosts? 15 And now [c]we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness [7]are set up; yea,

[c] Psa. 73. 12; chap. 2. 17.—[7] Heb. *are built.*

so far as they know, they have done all that the law requires. But, they argue, if they have done this they are entitled to the divine blessings. This belief found support in the law (Deut. xxviii, 1–14), and it was the popular idea that a righteous and just God must reward the faithful service with prosperity and punish faithlessness with adversity (see on Amos iv, 6–11). When these contemporaries of Malachi found that their expectations were not realized, they were seriously perplexed. So far as they could judge, no special benefits came to those who served Jehovah; on the contrary, pious persons were deeply afflicted, while the wicked lived in ease and prosperity. **And now**—Introduces the statement of a present fact and experience. **We call the proud happy**—The *proud* are not the heathen, but the arrogant persons within the Jewish community, who have no regard for God and who think that they can get along without him and religion, the very opposite of the humble, God-fearing persons mentioned in verse 16 (compare Psa. xix, 13, 14). These arrogant persons, who, according to the law (Deut. xxvii, 15–26; xxviii, 15ff.), should have been smitten with the curse of God, were enjoying the greatest prosperity and every one considered them perfectly happy and contented (compare Psa. xxxvii). **Are set up**—R. V., "built up." Instead of being destroyed they are built up like a magnificent structure; they flourish in all their undertakings. All this was contrary to the passages quoted from Deuteronomy, as well as to such prophetic utterances as Jer. xii, 16, 17. **Tempt God**—The same verb is translated in verse 10 "prove"; here the thought is that they challenge Jehovah through their wickedness (Isa. v, 18, 19). Persons who do

they that [d]tempt God are even delivered.

16 Then they [e]that feared the

[d] Psa. 95. 9.—[e] Psa. 66. 16; chap. 4. 2.

these things surely deserve to be destroyed, but instead, when they do get into difficulties, Jehovah graciously interferes and delivers them. With these experiences in everyday life contradicting the teaching of the past, is it any wonder that the people were perplexed, that grave doubts came into the minds of some? Had they "gone to the sanctuary of God" (Psa. lxxiii, 17) they might have found relief.

Not the entire community was carried away by these doubts; there were those who possessed a stronger faith, who passed through the same perplexities, but believed that Jehovah was still in the heavens, and that somehow at some time he would reward the faithful and punish the faithless. To these patient saints the prophet turns in verse 16. **Then**—When the skeptically inclined had given expression to their misgivings (verses 14, 15). **They that feared Jehovah**—The God-fearing persons (see on ii, 5) are the truly pious, whose faith in Jehovah is not easily shaken. **Spake often one to another**—The evidences of skepticism on every hand caused the faithful to join forces and come together frequently for the purpose of strengthening one another's faith and counteracting the spread of skepticism. What they "spake" is not stated; it is clearly implied, however, that they spoke words of counsel, encouragement, and exhortation, to wait patiently until Jehovah in his own good time would manifest his righteousness. It is not possible to identify the God-fearing persons of verse 16 with the persons who gave expression to their doubts in the language of verses 14, 15; two distinct classes are meant. If so, the LXX. reading *this* or *thus* in the place of *then* cannot be considered an improvement over the present Hebrew

LORD [f]spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard *it*, and [g]a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name. **17** And [h]they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my [8] [i]jewels; and [k]I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. **18** [l]Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.

[f] Heb. 3. 13.——[g] Psa. 56. 8; Isa. 65. 6; Rev. 20. 12.——[h] Exod. 19. 5; Deut. 7. 6; Psa. 135. 4; Tit. 2. 14; 1 Pet. 2. 9.——[8] Or, *special treasure*.——[i] Isa. 62. 3.——[k] Psa. 103. 13.——[l] Psa. 58. 11.

FOR, behold, [a]the day cometh,

CHAPTER IV.

[a] Joel 2. 31; chap. 3. 2; 2 Pet. 3. 7.

text; and if it were original, *this* could not refer backward to verses 14, 15, but must point forward to the conversations of the pious, which are not stated. It seems best to retain the present Hebrew text. **Hearkened, ... heard**—God paid attention to these conversations, and they were so pleasing to him that he determined to make a record of them and of the names of those who continued to fear him. **A book of remembrance**—Certainly this is to be understood figuratively; the thought is that Jehovah will remember the conduct of these pious souls until the day of reckoning, when their patience and fidelity will receive suitable reward. The figure may have been suggested by the "book of chronicles" of the Persian court (Esth. ii, 23; vi, 1; x, 2), in which seem to have been recorded the names and deeds of those who merited the royal favor (compare Isa. iv, 3; Dan. xii, 1). **For them**—For the benefit of them. **Thought upon his name**—Better, *highly esteemed* (Isa. xiii, 17) or *honored*. For *name* see on i, 6, and references there.

17a is rendered more literally in R. V., "And they shall be mine, saith Jehovah of hosts, even mine own possession, in the day that I make"; margin, "do this"; literally, *And they shall be to me, saith Jehovah of hosts, for the day on which I do, a possession*. **In the day** (R. V.)—Literally, "for the day." The names of the pious will be preserved (verse 16) for the day of reckoning, so that on that day they may be singled out to receive their reward. **Make** (R. V.)—Or, *do;* better, *act*, that is, in judgment. His inactivity of which the skeptics complain will then cease. **A possession** (R. V.)—He will acknowledge them as his own, and this acknowledgment will assure them the divine favor and protection (compare Exod. xix, 5), in the day of reckoning, and will result in their salvation and glorification. **I will spare them**—From all suffering and harm, just as a loving father protects his son who has rendered loving and obedient service to him.

18. In that day the skeptics will see that Jehovah does distinguish between the righteous and the wicked, and that he does reward all according to their deeds, whether they be good or evil (2 Cor. v, 10). **Then**—In the day mentioned in verse 17. **Ye**—The skeptics addressed in verses 13ff. **Return, and discern**—Better, *ye shall discern again*. Accounts had been handed down from ancient times telling how Jehovah rewarded the good and punished the wicked; in their own days these divine manifestations seemed to have ceased, hence the skepticism; but in the day of Jehovah's coming his fairness and justice will be recognized once more.

CHAPTER IV.

Verses 1-3 are closely connected with iii, 18. These verses describe the judgment to be executed upon the wicked (1), and the blessing to be poured upon the good (2, 3). **For**—Connects verse 1 with iii, 18; they will discern, because the events described here will take place. **The day**—The day of Jehovah alluded to

that shall burn as an oven; and all [b]the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be [c]stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall [d]leave them neither root nor branch.

2 But unto you that [e]fear my name shall the [f]Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. 3 [g]And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do *this*, saith the LORD of hosts.

[b] Chap. 3. 18.—[c] Obad. 18.—[d] Amos 2. 9.—[e] Chap. 3. 16.—[f] Luke 1. 78; Eph. 5. 14; 2 Pet. 1. 19; Rev. 2. 28.—[g] 2 Sam. 22. 43; Mic. 7. 10; Zech. 10. 5.

in iii, 2, 17 (see on Joel i, 15). **Burn as an oven**—R. V., "furnace." The terror of the day is likened to a fire raging in an oven or furnace that devours everything. **Stubble**—Dry stubble cast into the fire is easily consumed (see on Amos vii, 4–6); so evil doers are easily consumed in the day of judgment (compare Isa. v, 24; Zeph. i, 18). **All that do wickedly**—Now they may flourish (iii, 15), but their doom is already decreed. **Neither root nor branch**—The destruction will be complete (see on ii, 12; Amos ii, 9).

2, 3. How different will be the fate of the righteous! **Fear my name**—See on iii, 16, and references there. At present the God-fearing persons may seem to be forgotten by Jehovah, but he remembers their names, and in due time he will send relief and salvation. **The Sun of righteousness**—"Just as in the material world the shadows and distortions and illusions of night vanish before the light of the rising sun, which shows all things as they really are, so in the moral world the Sun of righteousness shall put to flight the difficulties and perplexities, the inequalities and anomalies, which have been the trial of the faithful and the weapon of the scoffer" (compare Isa. lx, 1). The promise of the rising of the Sun of righteousness is not a direct foreshadowing of the coming of Jesus; it refers rather to the manifestation of the divine righteousness in the day of reckoning (iii, 1), which will result in the justification of himself and in the salvation of the righteous. **Healing**—From all hurts and pains that now afflict them. **In his wings**—That is, the rays emanating from the sun. As light and warmth are scattered in every direction through these rays, so the healing influences of the Sun of righteousness will be felt everywhere. **Go forth, . . . grow up as calves**—When they are touched by the life-giving power of the divine righteousness "they shall be like calves, which are forced to stand through the winter in narrow stalls, but in early spring, when the sun comes forth from the wintry cloud veil, are again driven into the open, and therefore leap and skip with unrestrained joy." For *grow up* R. V. reads "gambol," which is preferable (compare Isa. xxxv, 6; Hab. i, 8).

Then they will be exalted, while the wicked, now proud and prosperous (iii, 15), will be trampled under foot. **Ye shall tread down . . . ashes**—The wicked, devoured by the fire of judgment, are reduced, as it were, to ashes, and like ashes they lie helpless upon the ground, while the pious, leaping for joy, pass over them. Of course, these statements are not to be understood literally; they present simply a picture of the great contrast between the destiny of the righteous and that of the wicked.

CLOSING ADMONITIONS, 4–6.

The last three verses of the book of Malachi have no immediate connection with the preceding section; they must be understood rather as closing admonitions belonging to the entire book, added by Malachi himself or by a later writer (see on Hos. xiv, 9). Recent commentators are inclined to the latter view, though Nowack, who accepts the originality of verse 4, admits that the question can never be settled with absolute certainty.

4 Remember ye the [h]law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him [i]in Horeb for all Israel, *with* [k]the statutes and judgments.

[h] Exod. 20. 3, etc. — [i] Deut. 4. 10. — [k] Psa. 147.19.

In favor of diversity of authorship Marti advances the following reasons: (1) The change in the persons addressed; in verse 3 the pious are addressed, in verse 4 the Jews in general. (2) The expansion of iii, 1, in verses 5, 6 is not in accord with Malachi's thought in the former passage. (3) Malachi never says "day of Jehovah" or "the great and dreadful day of Jehovah" (verse 5; compare verse 1; iii, 17; iv, 3). (4) Malachi speaks only of "the law" (ii, 8, 9), these verses of the "law of Moses" (verse 4). (5). Malachi frequently uses the formula "saith Jehovah of hosts," which is never found in these verses.

That there is an abrupt transition from verse 3 to 4 must be admitted, that the linguistic peculiarities mentioned exist is true; but that iv, 5, 6, are not in accord with the thought of iii, 1, is not so evident. The former is an expansion of the latter along a line that is perfectly admissible. The evidence is not definite enough to say that the verses *cannot* come from the author of the rest of the book; but if they do come from him it is quite likely that they were added by him subsequently to the writing of the rest of the book, as a general exhortation to prepare for the coming of Jehovah in judgment.

4. **Remember**—In a manner that will influence conduct. Only thus can they escape the terrors of the day of Jehovah. **The law of Moses**—If the entire Pentateuch was in existence in the days of Malachi this term includes the whole of it; if only a part was known it includes all that in those days went under the name of Moses (see on Hos. iv, 6). In postexilic times a greater emphasis was placed upon the law, because it was thought that by regulating every detail of life by law with state authority the religious and moral lapses of the past might be avoided. This *legalism* was needed at the time (see p. 555 and p. 703), and it did much toward preserving intact the religion of Jehovah. The religious leaders of the early postexilic period met the crisis of their age just as effectively as the eighth century prophets met the problems of their time; it was not their fault that in later days the religious leaders failed to see their opportunities, and that the emphasis of the letter of the law resulted in the end in entire neglect of the spirit, which brought about the decline of Judaism as a vital force in religion and morals. **My servant**—See on Hag. ii, 23; Zech. iii, 8. **Horeb**—Mentioned several times in the Old Testament, especially in Deuteronomy, as the place where the law was given to Moses (Deut. i, 6; iv, 10; v, 2; xxix, 1; 1 Kings viii, 9). **Statutes and judgments**—R. V., "and ordinances." The former means literally *that which is engraved* or inscribed, that is, upon public tablets; hence that which is decreed by one in authority; in the Old Testament, the decrees of Jehovah intended to govern the conduct of his people. The primary idea of the second word is "*judicial decision,* made once authoritatively, and constituting a rule or precedent, applicable to other similar cases in the future." The two words occur together quite frequently, especially in Deuteronomy. The difference between the two Driver indicates in these words: "*Judgments* being thus a term denoting primarily the provisions of civil and criminal law, *statutes* may be taken to refer more particularly to positive institutions or enactments, whether moral, ceremonial, or civil."

Verses 5, 6 deal with the messenger whose appearance is announced in iii, 1, and with his work of preparing the way for the coming of the Lord.

5 Behold, I will send you [l]Elijah the prophet [m]before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: 6 And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and [n]smite the earth with [o]a curse.

[l]Matt. 11. 14; 17. 11; Mark 9. 11; Luke 1. 17.

[m] Joel 2. 31.—[n] Zech. 14. 12.—[o] Zech. 5. 3.

Behold, I will send—See on iii, 1. **Elijah the prophet**—There can be no doubt that he is to be identified with the messenger of iii, 1. Whether the author expected a literal fulfillment, in the sense that Elijah would come in person, or whether the name is to be understood, like *David* in Hos. iii, 5 (see there), in the sense of a second Elijah, a prophet like Elijah, it may be difficult to say. That there was current even in New Testament times a belief in the coming again of Elijah himself as well as of other prophets is shown by passages like Matt. xvi, 14. Jesus and the New Testament writers declare that the prophecy found its fulfillment in the coming of John the Baptist (Matt. xi, 14; Mark ix, 11, 13). That Elijah should be singled out as the messenger from heaven was quite natural in view of the fact that he alone of all the prophets did not die a natural death, but "went up by a whirlwind into heaven" (2 Kings ii, 11). On this promise G. A. Smith makes the following suggestive remarks: "Malachi expects this prophecy . . . not in the continuance of the prophetic succession by the appearance of original personalities, developing further the great principles of their order, but in the return of the first prophet Elijah. This is surely the confession of Prophecy that the number of her servants is exhausted and her message to Israel fulfilled. She can now do no more for the people than she has done. But she will summon up her old energy and fire in the return of her most powerful personality, and make one grand effort to convert the nation before the Lord come and strike it with judgment." The promise is the same as in iii, 1, that the messenger will come before the appearance of Jehovah himself in judgment. **The great and dreadful day**—See on Joel ii, 11, 31.

Mal. iii, 1, and iv, 5, contain the promise that the messenger will prepare the way before the Lord; iv, 6, explains wherein the preparation consists, namely, in an attempt to convert the nation, so that the terror of the day of Jehovah may be averted. This conversion is described as a turning of "the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers." Two interpretations of these words have been proposed: (1) The fathers are the patriarchs, the children their descendants, the contemporaries of the author. The patriarchs are ashamed of their descendants, and refuse to acknowledge them, on account of their corruption; on the other hand, the descendants have no heart fellowship with their ancestors, because they fail to understand and appreciate their lofty spiritual and moral ideals. Elijah will attempt to turn the hearts of the corrupt children to the fathers, so that they will seek to imitate the example of the latter and walk in their ways. When this is done the heart of the fathers will turn again to the children in paternal recognition and love. (2) A second interpretation sees in the *fathers* and the *children* two classes in the prophet's own time, the men of maturity and the younger generation, and between the two a great gulf. The younger generation, says Von Orelli, "had broken with the law which the fathers still held outwardly in high esteem; the latter, on this account, were estranged from the young. When that Elijah turns the nation to God, he will do away with this gulf. In again teaching the sons to fear God, he will again win the hearts of

the fathers for them; and in again breathing into the fathers a fatherly spirit, he will again awaken in the hearts of the sons confidence and good will to the fathers." On the whole, the second interpretation is to be preferred, but the correctness of the explanation of the nature of the gulf may be doubted. It is better to bring these words into connection with Mic. vii, 5, 6, where the results of religious apostasy are described: even the closest and most sacred ties come to be disregarded and broken. A similar thought underlies the promise of verse 6. The present is hopelessly corrupt, but when Elijah comes he will try to change conditions and restore peace and good will in accord with the will and purpose of God. The words are, then, a figure of the restoration and reformation for which Elijah will labor, in order that this earth may become a fit dwelling place for Jehovah. **Smite the earth with a curse**—*Curse* is literally *ban*. Whatever is placed under a ban is given up to destruction (Deut. xiii, 16, 17; Lev. xxvii, 28, 29). Jehovah will surely come, but unless sin is removed before he comes he must wipe it out by a terrible blast of judgment. This statement implies that, if the mission of Elijah is successful, Jehovah will come as King of peace, to dwell in peace in the midst of his people.

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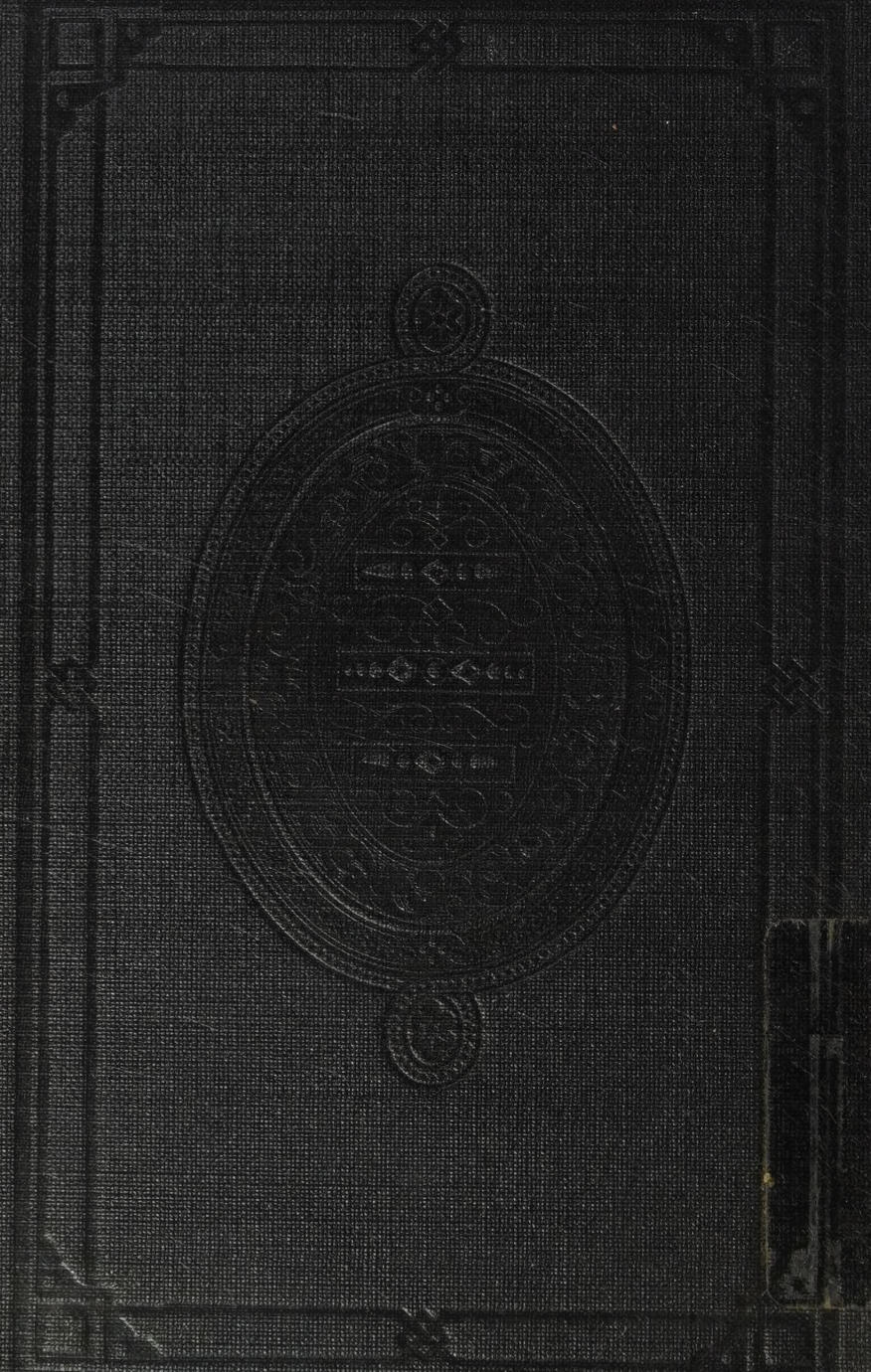
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